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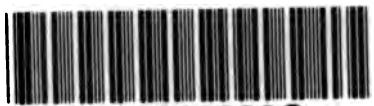
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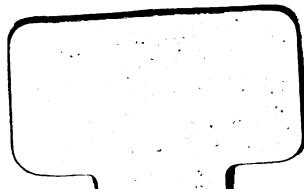
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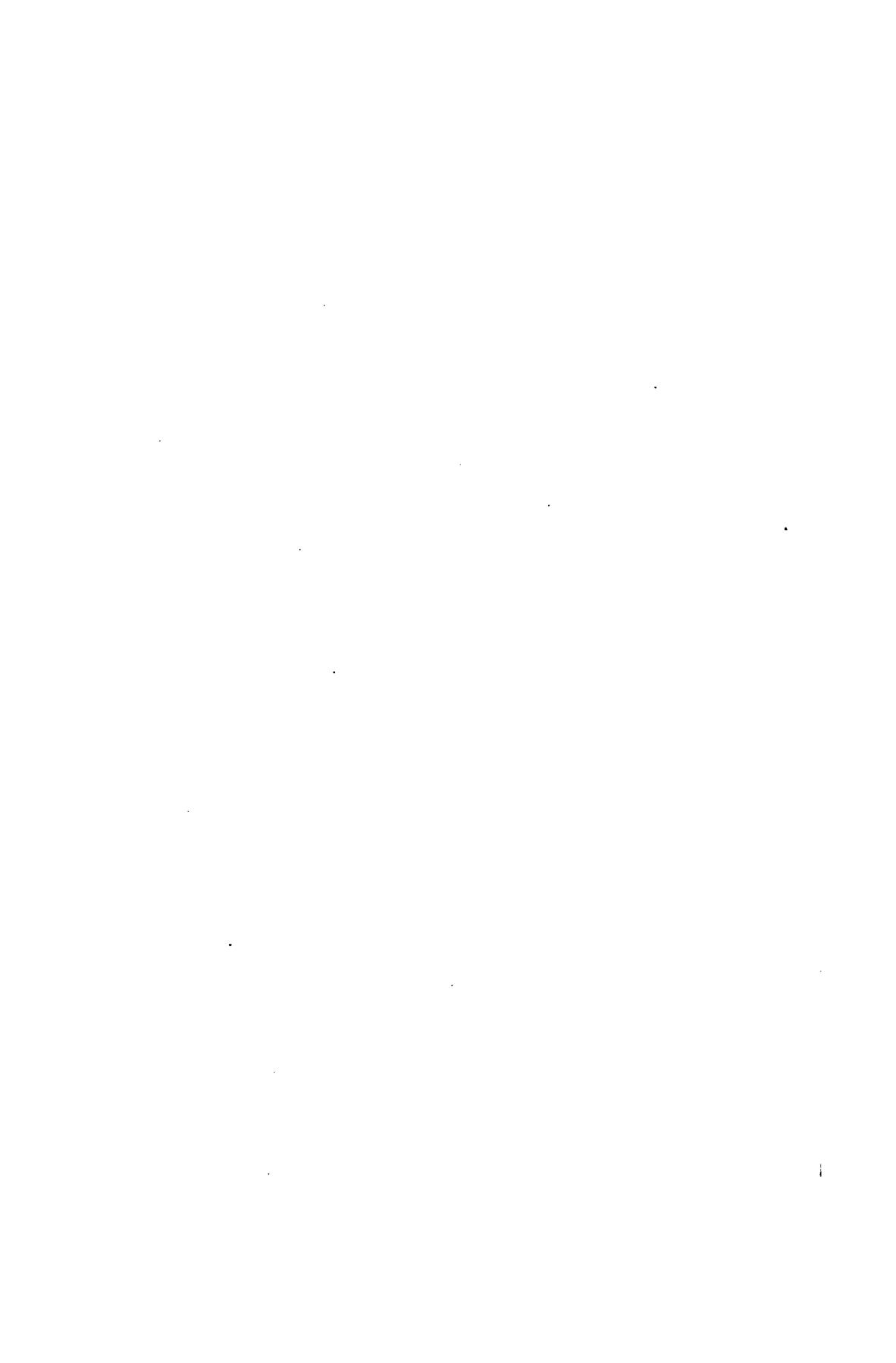
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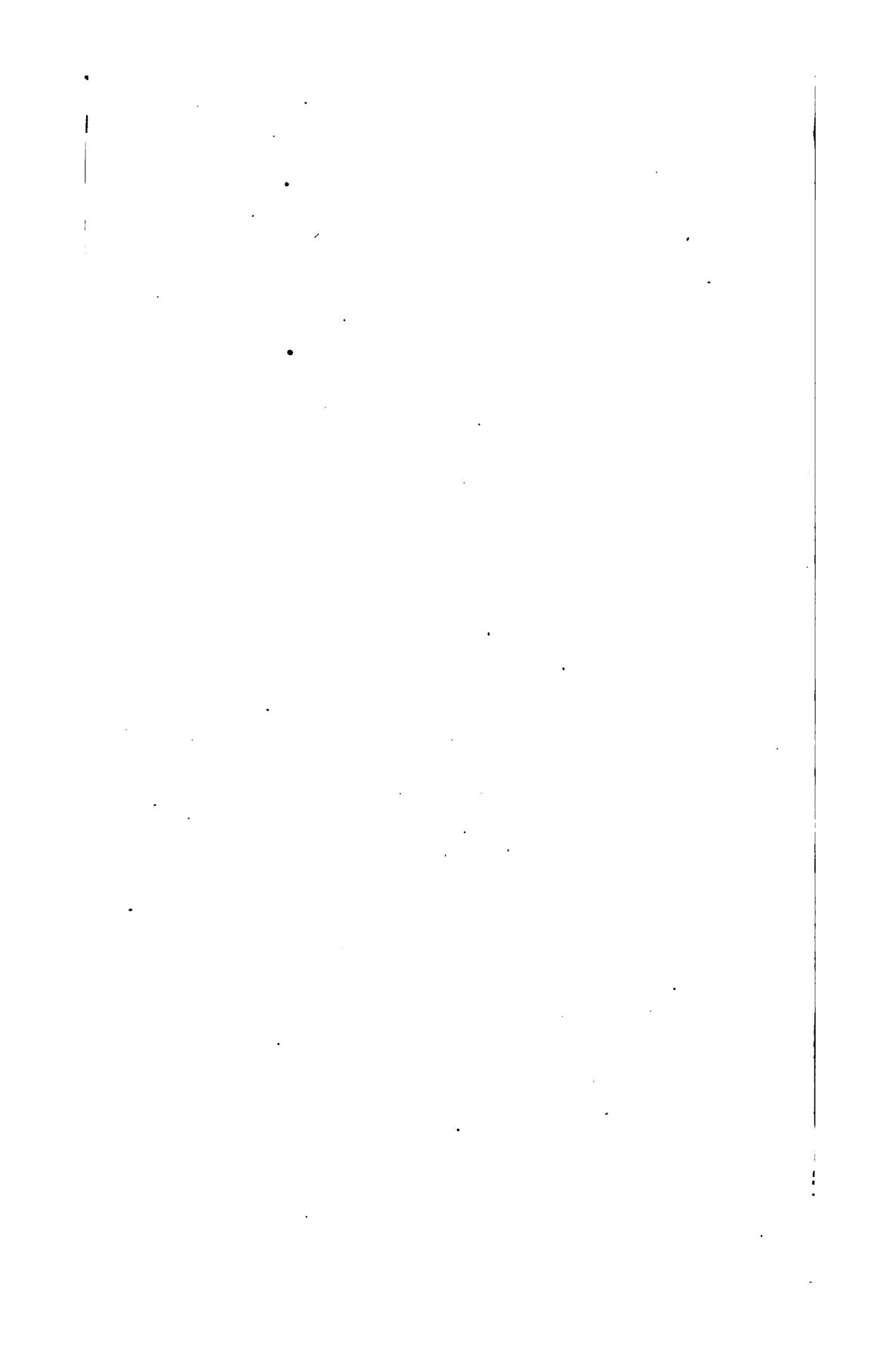




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YACHTING TALES

BY

W. H. G. KINGSTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE CRUISE OF THE FROLIC,"

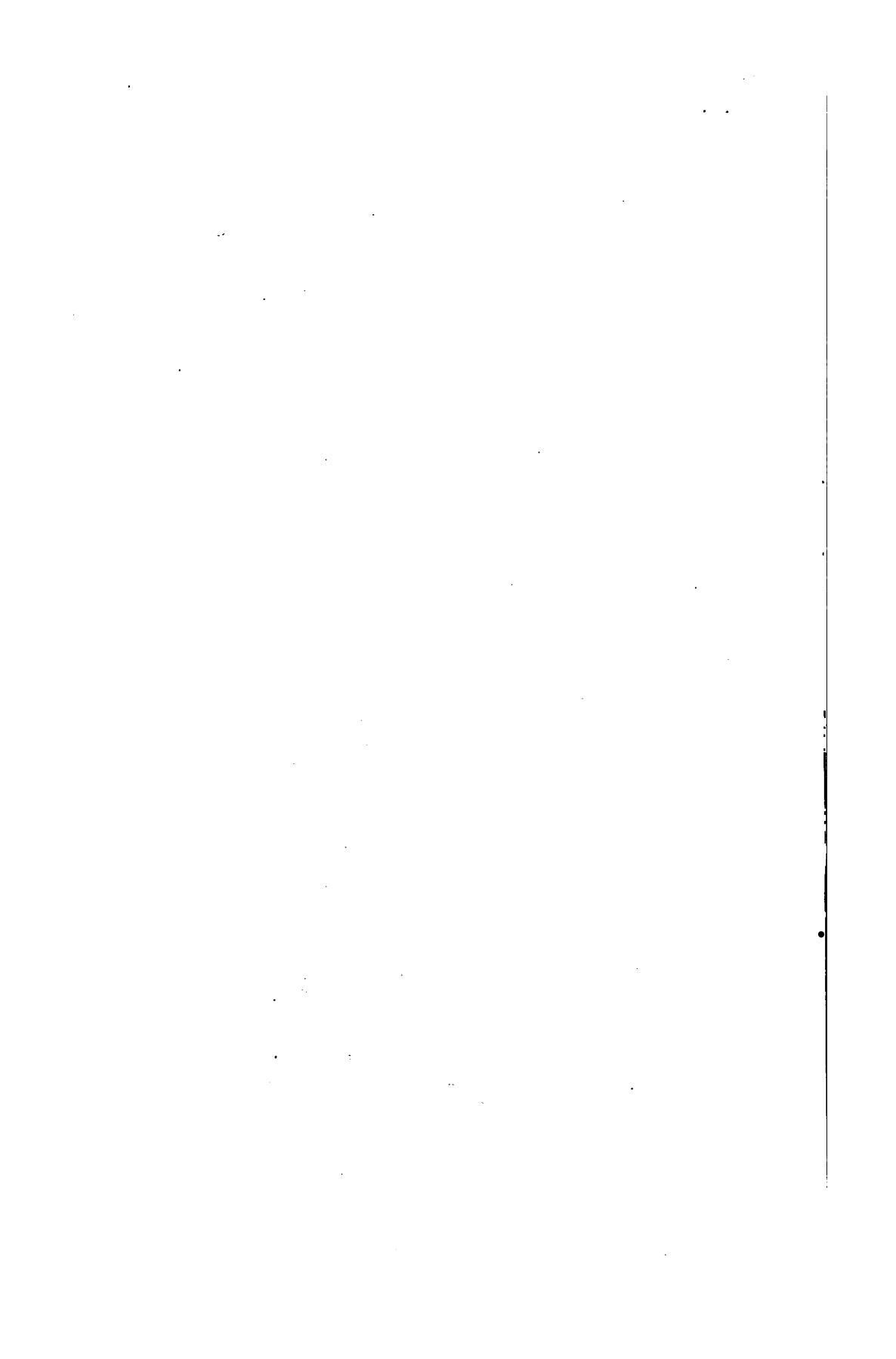
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SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1877.

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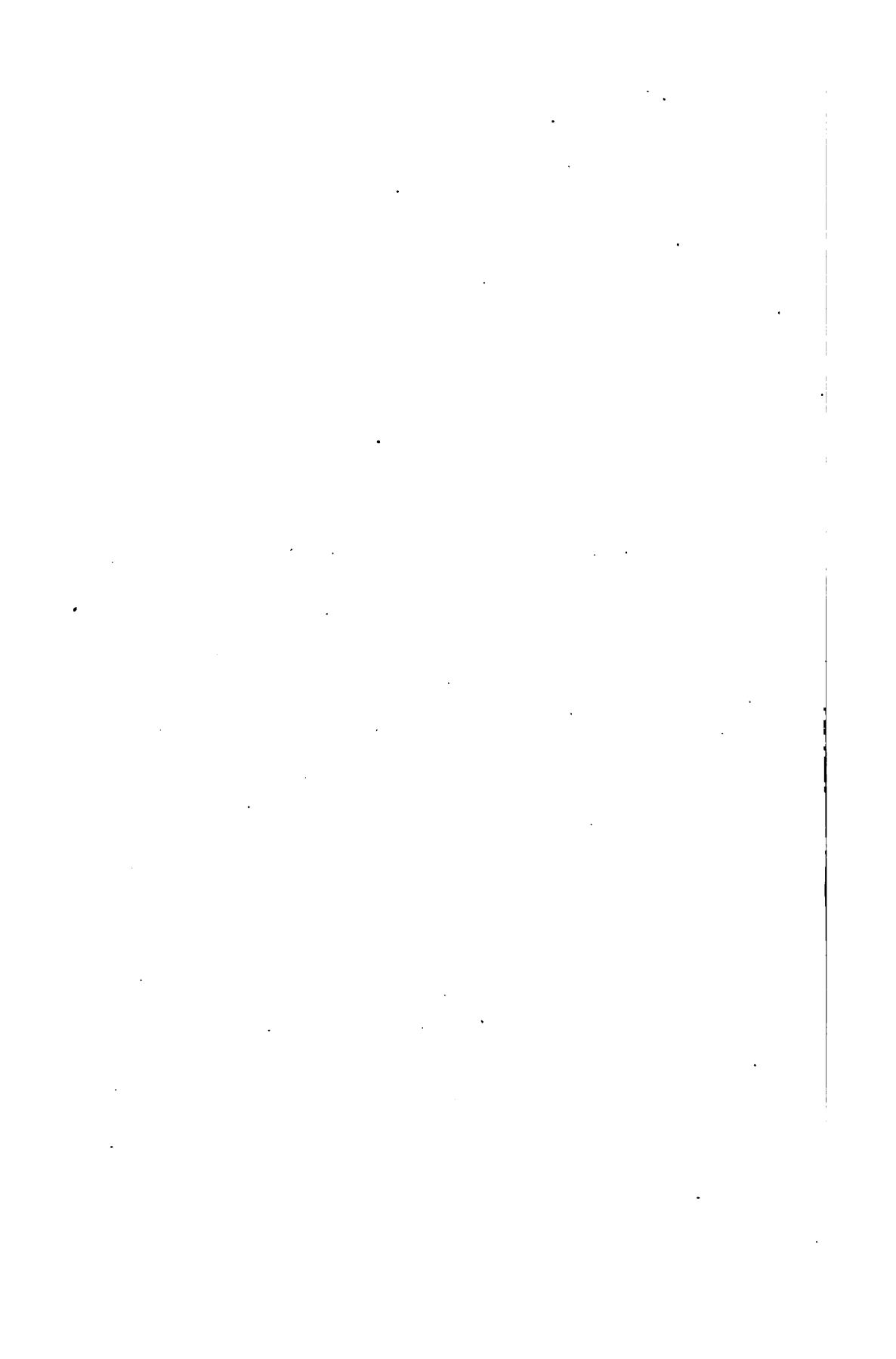
P R E F A C E .

I ONCE was a Yachtsman, and with no little pride enjoyed the privilege of sporting the crown and anchor buttons, and hoisting the red burgee of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, of which I was one of the earliest members.

The following work was written many years ago, when, although I had retired from the Club, the salt breezes of the still loved blue ocean were fresh in my nostrils, and the recollection of my Yachting days as vivid as ever ;—when, with pen in hand—in fancy, at all events—I was still viewing the shores of the Solent, cruising round the Isle of Wight, running down Channel, or standing across to France ; so that I may hope this production of the imagination will not be found lacking in freshness or faithful colouring, and will afford the lovers of that most delightful and sensible of all amusements—Yachting—as much pleasure in its perusal as I enjoyed in writing it.

WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON.

April, 1877.



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OLD HIGSON'S WILL,

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO HEIRS AND THEIR YACHTS.

THE blue sea, rippled over with the gentle breath of a southerly wind, glittered brightly in the rays of a noonday sun as numerous vessels of all rigs, easily distinguished from Shankline Downs, at the back of the Isle of Wight, were standing down channel with every sail which would draw set to catch the coy breeze. There were ships, some crowded with emigrants bound to Australia or Canada, and brigs, colliers, and other coasters, and brigantines going up the Straits for fruit, and three or four luggers beating across to the French coast, and there were cutters, schooners, and yawls ; indeed, every rig usually seen in those waters had one or more representatives. Among them were several yachts. We have, however, more to do with two fine cutters, each of about a hundred and twenty tons, and which, from their keeping close in shore, were evidently doing so both to make the circuit of the island and to enable those on board to examine the beauties of the coast scenery, not to be surpassed, perhaps, by many other parts of the shores of England. On board one of the yachts in question were several ladies, two of middle age, and three young and fair ; indeed, it might have been difficult to have found three prettier girls together ashore or afloat on old Neptune's realm on that fine July morning. One was an invalid, for although the day was warm she had a shawl wrapped round her, and was propped up on the deck surrounded by soft cushions. One of the other young ladies was seated at her side, ready to render her any of those little services which an invalid so much requires. There were three gentlemen. One, who wore a yachting uniform, was apparently the owner of the craft, and the other two his guests. One of the latter was leaning over the side, and pointing out to the third young lady the various points of interest on shore, while the owner was engaged in conversation with one of the elderly ladies.

"Yes, indeed, I trust that the sea-air and thorough change of scene will have a beneficial effect on your daughter's health, my dear madam," said the gentleman. "I shall be more than amply repaid if such is the happy result of her stay on board the Lone."

"And I shall be for ever grateful, whatever is the result, for your generosity and the sacrifices you have made for us," answered the lady.

"On that point, pray, do not say a word. I have always taken great pleasure in yachting, but I confess that I have at present no satisfaction in doing what does not lead to some useful result. I should lose all the enjoyment I now feel if I had merely to sail up and down without any definite object in view; I am, therefore, much indebted to you and your daughters for affording me what I trust may prove a useful one."

"It is very kind in you to put it in that light. I pray that the result may be equal to your expectations," said the lady, looking towards her daughter with an anxious glance.

On board the other yacht were also several ladies and five or six gentlemen. They seemed to be in high good humour with the world and themselves.

"Really this deck is made for a dance," cried one of the young ladies, making a glicé across it. "It is as steady, too, as if we were in harbour. I could not resist dancing if I were asked."

"And I am sure that no dancing-man could resist the temptation of asking you, Miss Stunner," observed a stout, weather-beaten yachting-man who had overheard her. "But what will your chaperone, Lady Rowdy Dow, say to it? She has come to preserve order and sobriety, she told me, and if you once begin toeing and heeling it, good-bye to both for the rest of the cruise."

"Oh, fie, Captain Bulkhead! How ungallant in you to say that," exclaimed the young lady. "It shall not prevent us having our fun, I can tell you, though. I shall ask one of the other gentlemen if no one asks me, you'll see, and in ten minutes from this time we'll have the fiddle going. It was a bright idea, whoever conceived it, of bringing that blind fiddler. But I must to my task. Now, don't interfere with me, honour bright!"

The fair Sophy was as good as her word, and though Lady Rowdy Dow protested that she could allow no dancing, in less time than she had given herself she had induced the whole party to stand up. The fiddler began scraping away, and they commenced footing it right merrily. As to the beauties of the scenery, no one seemed to care very much about them. A quadrille and a waltz had been performed when the steward announced luncheon, and with scarcely a glance at Ventnor,

off which they then were, they all dived below, led by Lady Rowdy Dow, where a substantial repast, with champagne and no lack of other wines, awaited them.

"I say, Bulkhead, will you take the foot of the table and attend to the ladies in your immediate neighbourhood?" said the owner of the yacht. "Lord Rowdy, please to look after Mrs. Bangup; I'll attend to her ladyship; and Jack, I know that you will do your duty. I commend Miss Stunner especially to your charge. Now I think that we are all right."

If eating and drinking could make people happy, and laughing and talking were a sign that they were so, the party on board the yacht ought to have been in a state of supreme felicity. At last they again went on deck, but some of the gentlemen found it far more difficult to direct their feet aright than they had done before.

"Very slow work it must be aboard the *Ione*," observed Captain Bulkhead, as he turned his glass towards the other yacht, which was still at no great distance off, the sailing qualities of the two vessels being apparently very equal. "They seem to do nothing but sit and stare at the shore. It's all very well in its way, but an occasional look at it ought to satisfy any reasonable creature."

But how come these two yachts to be where we have introduced them, and who are all those people on board? The reply to these questions involves rather a long story, and demands an independent chapter.

CHAPTER II.

MARMADUKE AND MARTIN: INCIDENTS IN THEIR PRIVATE HISTORY.

MARMADUKE DELAMERE had a very satisfactory opinion of himself. He believed that he was a genius—a man of infinite talent, wit, and humour thrown away; that his bright qualities were obscured; that he was in his wrong place; that he ought to be in the senate, or associating with people of fashion in the gay circles of London, or that he should have been in the Guards, or an attaché to the embassy at Paris or Vienna, instead of sitting on a high stool before an ink-stained desk, with a pen behind his ear, in a dingy counting-house in St. Swithin's-lane.

What a fate for a Delamere! though, to be sure, he was the fifth son of a younger son of the Honourable Adolphus Delamere. It all came of having an uncle, Tobias Higson, who would be his god-father, and insisted on his entering the office of Sniggins, Toppin, Higson, and Co.—the two former being mythical characters, or having so long departed

this life that no one recollects anything about them, while the nameless Co. were the actual working partners of the establishment. His great consolation was that he had had an honourable for a grandfather. This enabled him to look satisfactorily down on his plebeian associates, as he deemed them, in the office—though the said associates, who were sons of reputable members of society, were not aware of the feelings with which they were regarded, but, on the contrary, were rather inclined to consider Delamere an ass, who would never rise much above the position of a copying-clerk, if he were even retained in the office. Of this, considering the opinion which the managing clerk of Sniggins, Toppin, Higson, and Co. entertained of him, there appeared to be some doubt. In whatever estimation the rest of the world might have held Marmaduke Delamere, his mother, at all events, considered him a very superior young man. What elegant poetry he wrote! what exquisite taste he displayed in the selection of his waistcoats and ties! how gracefully he waltzed! how well he did everything he tried to do! To be sure, he seldom attempted a more arduous undertaking than those that have been mentioned. It was very much against her will that her dear Marmaduke had been forced into the office of Sniggins, Toppin, Higson and Co., but Mr. Delamere, who was a sensible man of the world, would have it so. He was not going to allow a son of his to throw away so good a chance of advancing himself by any such foolish fancies. Beneath him! Not a bit of it. Some of the best people in the land had been clerks in counting-houses, and had become wealthy merchants. It was impossible to say what old Higson might not do for him. He should like to know what else Marmaduke was fit for? He could not buy him a commission in the army—he had not talent enough to obtain one through a competitive examination.

"Not that sort of talent, my dear, perhaps," observed Mrs. Delamere, in rather a scornful tone.

"I mean any practical talent, likely to be of the slightest use to him in the world, my dear," observed Mr. Delamere. "The boy is well enough in his way, but he is not very far removed from a goose with regard to any ability he may possess calculated to advance him in life."

This was not the first time Mr. Delamere had expressed a similar opinion of his fourth son. The rest were already engaged in various pursuits, fighting the battle of life with steadiness, perseverance, and consequent success. Mrs. Delamere knew that her wisest course was to hold her tongue; for though Mr. Delamere was a worthy man and a kind husband, he was very apt to take his own way, in spite of whatever

his wife might say. Accordingly, Marmaduke was sent to the office of Sniggins, Toppin, Higson, and Co., with a gentle hint from his father that if he did not behave himself, and make the most of the advantages he enjoyed, it would be the worse for him. Marmaduke knew from experience that his father meant what he said, and therefore, for a wonder, bore himself discretely in the presence of his superiors.

He had a cousin in the same establishment, slightly his superior in point of age and standing in the office. Martin Bayfield was a fine gentlemanly young fellow, kind-hearted and universally liked by those of his own age. He took to business, not because he had any especial liking for it, but as he would anything else which was set before him to do. His companions considered that he would get on better than Marmaduke, but still he did not look on him as likely to become much of a man. He, also, was a godson of old Higson's, who had volunteered to take him into his counting-house. Martin knew a number of people, and went a good deal into society, not, perhaps, of the class Marmaduke especially courted, and which he was pleased to call the *creme de la creme*—an expression he had heard his mother use, though he did not exactly understand its signification. Martin's friends were generally practical people, engaged in the pursuit of science or art, or in benefiting their fellow creatures, who considered that life was given that something might be done during it, not aimlessly frittered away.

Marmaduke, therefore, did not hold his cousin Martin in much estimation. The only person, indeed, of his own age among his acquaintances whom he did respect was an old schoolfellow, Jack Adair. Jack was undoubtedly a fast man. He prided himself on being one, and his mother, Lady Adair, was rather vain of her son's notoriety in that respect. How he lived as he did it might be difficult to say. If he was asked, his reply was, "On my wits; they are, I am thankful to say, tolerably sharp, and they enable me to live well." People did say that Jack Adair was an adept with a billiard-cue, and not unknown in dens where play ran high; but whatever were his employments of that description, he was too wise to blazen them abroad, so that in decent society he was looked on only as an agreeable rattle with no great harm in him. Marmaduke admired him amazingly, and endeavoured to imitate his style, and though he, in common with many others, thought Marmaduke a donkey, he rather liked him; besides that, he thought he might possibly some day find him useful, should his emergencies at any time compel him to fly a kite or so—not an improbable event.

Once, and not long ago, Adair had come to the resolution of breaking through his old habits and mode of life, and of settling down steadily to

some profitable and respectable occupation. He had fallen in love, but the object of his affections was not the sort of person such men as Jack Adair generally admired. Ethel Arundel was a quiet, refined, amiable, right-principled girl. Her beauty was of a high order. She was a blonde, soft and delicate ; not the least of her attractions being that she seemed perfectly unconscious that she possessed any. Jack, after, as he fancied, paying her great attentions, such as could not but prove acceptable, made her a direct offer, when, greatly to his surprise, she positively and firmly refused him. He told her, and he believed it, that she would be the making of him ; that the hopes of possessing her would be the motive to a complete change of life, an incentive to the performance of great and noble actions. In truth, he became wonderfully eloquent as to what he would do, though he had very little to say as to what he had done. She quietly replied, that she believed noble actions must be performed from very different motives to those he suggested. He asked her whether her affections were disengaged. She positively declined to give him an answer on the subject, and begged him to understand that nothing would ever induce her to accept his offer. Jack was very far gone. He required a confidant, and feeling the impossibility of saying anything on the subject to his ordinary associates, he confessed his weakness to Marmaduke, who would, he knew, afford him his utmost sympathy. Marmaduke was highly flattered at the confidence shown him—expressed his opinion that Miss Arundel could not possibly be so hard-hearted as she appeared—and in spite of what she had said, that she would ultimately yield. Something, however, whispered to Marmaduke,

“Perhaps her affections are engaged, and you yourself are the happy man to possess them.”

He had paid her attentions, though he could not say that she seemed to appreciate them as much as she ought to have done. Still, he could not play false to Jack ; yet, if she persisted in refusing his friend, why, he would go in for his chance.

Such was the state of affairs when the firm of Sniggins, Toppin, Higson, and Co. were thrown into a state of commotion by hearing that their respected senior, Tobias Higson, had suddenly departed this life. The general opinion of the younger clerks was, that Marmaduke would quickly be ousted from his situation. Great, therefore, was their astonishment, and that of others, when, after the lapse of some days, the will being opened, the lawyer announced to Marmaduke Delamere and to Martin Bayfield that their uncle had left to each of them a sum yielding a clear income of five thousand a year, to be enjoyed provisionally, how-

ever; the capital was invested in the names of certain trustees. Each was to make the best use of the income left him, to spend the whole of it in a way becoming a gentleman. At the end of five years, should the income not have been spent, in the opinion of the trustees, in a satisfactory manner by either one of the nephews, the larger portion was to be given to the other, three hundred a year only being retained by the unfortunate one. Neither of them was to be informed who were the umpires in the matter, nor were any rules given them for their guidance. The income was to be spent in a gentlemanly liberal way, and, at the same time, to be usefully employed. The only possible way the nephews had of judging what would be considered the right mode of spending their incomes was, by considering the character of their uncle and the men he was likely to select as their judges or umpires.

Marmaduke was almost beside himself with delight when he first heard of the fortune left him. When, however, the clause respecting its disposal was afterwards communicated to him his spirits fell considerably. To what annoying, what horrible supervision might he not be subjected. His mother was scandalised, she said, at the arrangement; it was unjust, cruel. She almost wished that old Higson had not left poor Marmaduke a shilling. Marmaduke, however, did not hold to that opinion. He hurried off to consult Jack Adair on the subject. Jack considered a minute.

"The clause is a great bore, there's no doubt about that; it will tie you down terribly; still, five years is a good bit out of a man's life. You have got the money secure for that time. And five times five is twenty-five, and twenty-five thousand pounds is a tidy sum if you saw it in a lump. Don't be afraid, my boy; I'll help you to spend it like a gentleman. Let me see, the summer is coming on. You'll have a yacht. You're fond of yachting, I know. I am, at all events, and I'll soon make you so. There isn't a better amusement, and that is gentlemanly, at all events. That matter is settled. I'll look out for a first-rate craft at once, and have your name put down at three or four of the leading yacht clubs. Then, for the winter, you'll keep a few hunters, and I wonder what old Higson would have said to your having a horse or two running for the Derby. That's a gentlemanly amusement, I should think. In the autumn I must secure you a moor in the Highlands, and a shooting-box, where you may ruralise with a few choice spirits, like myself and others, whom I must make known to you. I must, of course, get you into a few of the leading clubs; and, with regard to society, as you have already begun to make your way in the gay world, you will require no help from me when it is known that you are the happy possessor of five

thousand a year. The first thing, in my opinion, to be thought about is the yacht. Just give me a line authorising me to do the needful, and I will make all the arrangements necessary."

Marmaduke, as Jack well knew, had often talked of the delight of yachting, though, except during an occasional trip down the Thames in a steamer, or across to the Isle of Wight, he had positively scarcely seen a yacht, and had never been on board one. He, without hesitation, gave Jack the authority he demanded. Marmaduke had still a greater trial to go through. On his next visit to his late uncle's solicitor, he was informed that there was yet another clause in the will of the eccentric old gentleman. He was to take the name of Higson.

"What, exchange Delamere for such a plebeian name as that?" he exclaimed, unguardedly. Impossible. "It can't be necessary."

"As you think fit, sir. It is necessary, and you cannot touch a sixpence without conforming in all points to the will of your deceased relative," answered the man of business, in a dry tone.

His name was Higgs, so that the remark may not have been altogether pleasing to his ears.

"Well, I'll see about it," exclaimed Marmaduke, indignantly. "Is there any other clause in this —— will to which I shall have to conform?" He was going to use an improper expletive, but restrained himself in time. "Perhaps the old cove may have wished me to turn into a lawyer, or a parson, or some other equally delectable profession, or to continue quill-driving. Has Martin got to do all the things I have?"

"Your cousin and you are placed on precisely the same footing Mr. Delamere," answered Mr. Higgs. "He has made no objections to any of the clauses of the will. On the contrary, his gratitude to your uncle is expressed in all he says."

"Oh, yes, I know what all this means," muttered Marmaduke, turning on his heel. "He has determined to win. The fellow always was a sneak, but I'll beat him, notwithstanding."

"You'll let me know what you decide, Mr. Delamere," said the lawyer, calling after him. "For if I understand you aright, you have not made up your mind to accept the offer made in your uncle's will."

"Of course—of course," answered Marmaduke, turning round. "It's only that —— name sticks in my throat."

"At all events, you will let me know your decision," repeated the lawyer, rising to close the door which Marmaduke, in his indignation, had forgotten to shut.

He hastened to his mother to consult with her on this subject. She at first made some wry faces at hearing of the name, but she had a good supply of worldly sense.

The name is not pretty, I grant, but I assure you, my dear Marmaduke, that people do not think much about names now-a-days, and there are a very large number of girls who would very readily marry you as Marmaduke Higson, with five thousand a year, who would positively decline, under present circumstances, to unite their fate to yours. Don't think about the name. It's a very good one in its way ; old, I am sure—probably much older than Delamere—and people will always think of you as a Delamere. Delamere Higson does not sound badly, after all."

"Don't know. Can't say I like it," said Marmaduke. "Besides, suppose that, after all, I lose the fortune, I shall be saddled with the name, and nothing to show for it but a paltry three hundred a year."

"Oh, that must on no account be thought of!" shrieked Mrs. Delamere. "We must trust to your discretion and judgment to avoid so dreadful a catastrophe. You would break your father's heart, and I am sure you would mine, if you were to lose the property by any egregious folly. Surely it cannot be so difficult a matter to spend an income of five thousand a year properly, and that seems all that is required."

Encouraged by his mother, Marmaduke went back to Mr. Higgs, signed all the papers which would enable him to draw his income, took the legal necessary steps to enable him to assume the name of Higson, and then hastened to the lodgings of his friend, Jack Adair, to consult with him further as to the disposal of his expected cash.

CHAPTER III.

SHOWS HOW THE YACHTS WERE PURCHASED, AND INTRODUCES SOME HEROINES.

JACK ADAIR hurried down to Hampshire, and considered himself fortunate in finding a vessel just ready to launch in the yard of a celebrated builder, who having strong suspicions that the gentleman who had ordered her would not pay him, was glad to find a person ready at once to take her off his hands. A third of the purchase-money down was a temptation. He was not aware that he was not likely to get much more out of Mr. Jack Adair, who, appearing as the purchaser, was able to mortgage her at any time that he might feel so disposed. He took good care, however, by a little hocus-pocus that Marmaduke Higson should

be the ostensible owner. The name intended for the new yacht was the *Ianthe*.

"And a very pretty one it is. Let it be so," said Jack. "With regard to other points, I leave them to your judgment. I want her handsomely and comfortably fitted, so as to give plenty of accommodation to a large party, if necessary."

It so happened that the builder had two yachts of the same size on the stocks. The other was the *Ione*, which, having, as he said, sold to a gentleman in London, whose name he did not mention, he launched on the same day. They were both got ready for sea at the same time, and he at once wrote to their respective owners to inform them that he was prepared to hand the vessels over to them. Marmaduke, who had just been elected a member of the — Yacht Club, hurried down to take possession of his craft and to don his new uniform. He was highly delighted with his vessel, and very much disposed to take up his quarters at once on board. He had just poked his head up the companion-hatch, when who should he see standing on the deck of the *Ione* but his cousin Martin.

"What! have you taken to yachting, Martin?" he exclaimed. "I did not expect that, but I suppose that there isn't a more gentlemanly occupation, so it's all right."

"I did not think about that," answered Martin, in his usual quiet tone, which generally provoked Marmaduke. "I am very fond of yachting, however, and I had an object in view."

"Oh, of course," observed Marmaduke, with a sneer, which Martin did not think fit to notice. "And do you, too, belong to — Yacht Club?"

"Yes; I think these clubs useful institutions, which ought to be kept up, and I at once, when I determined to purchase a yacht, got my name put down as a candidate," said Martin.

"All very true. Then there are two Higsons in the club. I hope that they are proud of us," exclaimed Marmaduke.

As he was speaking, a compact, short, stoutish, but very healthy-looking, middle-aged gentleman, with white hair and florid complexion made his appearance on the deck of the *Ione*, and gave a peculiar glance at Marmaduke.

"One of Martin's queer acquaintances," thought that gentleman to himself. "I should have fancied that it was time for him to cut that style of thing now, but I doubt whether he will change at all. Hang it! I wish I knew what old Higson really expected us to do. Since I have taken his name, I'd go and do it, whatever it might be. People may

differ as to what is the right way to spend one's fortune as a gentleman. I am very much disposed to follow Jack's advice, to throw care to the dogs, and to take my fling in the way I fancy most. I shall have had something for my money at all events."

Marmaduke did follow Jack's advice.

The yacht was soon off Ryde Pier, when Jack joined her with three choice spirits whom he had brought from town. They soon voted that female society would be pleasant on board, and the willing services of Lady Rowdy Dow were secured as chaperone general. Although her antecedents might not have borne too minute an inquiry, as she had the support of her husband, Lord Rowdy, she was considered unexceptionable in that character. Lord Rowdy Dow was a good natured, easy-going, middle-aged gentlemen, more like the description generally given of an alderman than a nobleman; her ladyship declared that she was really fond of him, he was so convenient; he gave her, indeed, a title, and position, and respectability, and let her do exactly what she liked. Marmaduke had known her in London, and had been at her parties, and she was now perfectly ready to patronise him and to make ample use of his yacht. She had formed the party who have been introduced on board the Ianthe, taking a trip round the island. Indeed, so completely did her ladyship in a short time gain the upper hand of him, that he dared ask no one on board without first consulting her.

Mrs. Delamere was very intimate with the Arundels, and Marmaduke, who fancied himself in love with Ethel, hearing that they were coming down to Ryde, was very anxious to ask them on board. A sister of Ethel's was a great invalid, and her medical attendant had advised that she should be as much as possible on the water. Lady Rowdy Dow, however, had an especial dislike to Mrs. Arundel, who would not visit her, and her ladyship took very good care, therefore, that the invitation should be so worded that it could not possibly be accepted. She suspected, indeed, his penchant for Ethel Arundel, and as she had a niece, a clever, somewhat fast young lady, for whom she intended him, she had no intention that the said penchant should be indulged.

Miss Elizabeth Barrackyard was the daughter of a military officer, and, as she had lived most of her life with the regiment, she was well up to the ways of the he kind, and prided herself on being able to manage them as she wished. She was a jolly, fat, and fair damsel with a considerable amount of beauty—not very delicate, perhaps; that, however, Marmaduke, who was near-sighted, did not discover. She was familarly known by her military acquaintance as "Our Bet." She soon made her appearance at Ryde after her aunt had taken possession of the Ianthe.

Jack Adair had been called away to London about some pecuniary matters. He was greatly annoyed at finding the mess, as he called it, into which Marmaduke had got. He had no intention that Lady Rowdy Dow should reign supreme on board the Ianthe, nor that Marmaduke should entangle himself, still less marry Bet Barrackyard. Jack saw that Marmaduke's only wise game was to marry an heiress. If he could secure one with a thumping fortune, he might laugh at old Higson's will. Jack rubbed his hands with delight as the thought occurred to him, he of course intending to benefit largely by the arrangement.

"There's Susan Porridge—old Peter Porridge's daughter—just suit the noodle. Saw him arrive with '*my wife and my darter*' on the pier only yesterday, waddling along like a duck in a thunderstorm, and puffing and blowing like a grampus. Heard him say that he was going to stop at Ryde. Must look him up immediately. Must get rid of Lady Rowdy. Easily manage it. Invite the Porridges at an early hour, and tell her ladyship to come an hour afterwards. Observe that time and tide can wait for no one, and that if we don't sail with the tide we shall lose our trip. Get off without her and her friends the instant the Porridge party come on board. She'll be fearfully angry with Marmaduke, but that won't matter. I can easily back out of the scrape."

Such were the cogitations of Jack Adair as he sat on the companion-hatch of the yacht smoking his morning cigar. Marmaduke was still in bed. He had been at a party the night before, and had come on board not without the assistance of two of his men, who had picked him up on the pier very drunk. It was a too usual fault of his, and it was not one in which Jack wished that he would not indulge; indeed, his Mentor's wish was to make Marmaduke appear as moral and correct as possible. In this he expected to be assisted by Captain Bulkhead, who was a very worthy old fellow, and, to all appearance, very easy-going. He had been invited by Marmaduke himself, not, however, without a protest, in the first instance, from Jack, who notwithstanding, in a short time altered his opinion of the facetious, merry naval officer. His arrangements for that day were set at nought by the early appearance of Lady Rowdy Dow and a whole tribe of followers on the pier-head, where she sat with a pair of binoculars watching the Ianthe as a cat does its prey. The only chance Jack had of avoiding her was by pulling at once up to the club-house, but he felt sure when he turned his glass towards her that she had seen him. Could he protest that among such a galaxy of beauty as was assembled no single individual was visible? But unfortunately, besides her own party, only a few unattractive individuals were to be seen at the time, and it would not do just yet to break with her

ladyship. Still he thought that, as it was high water, he would try to get up to the club without landing at the pier. He had not, however, proceeded far before he saw handkerchiefs waving frantically, and when he turned a blind eye towards them, the stentorian voice, which he could not fail to hear, of Lord Rowdy Dow came booming over the waters. A broad grin passed over the countenance of the crew.

"They are hailing us, sir," observed the coxswain. "I don't know whether it's the ladies, but they seems determined to make us find out that they are there."

Jack saw that there was no escape, so he stood up in the boat and made signs with his hand that he was going to the club, and would be back immediately. "If they don't understand that, it is no fault of mine," he said to himself. "I only hope that they will look for me up the pier, and then I may slip by them and go on board and get under weigh."

He remained as long a time as he could at the club, and at length pulled back to the yacht. As he got close to her he saw that her decks were occupied, and on stepping on board he was greeted by shouts of laughter.

"We thought that we would save you and Mr. Higson the trouble of taking us off, so, seeing Lord Rimore and Mr. Sniggs sauntering down the pier, we begged them to put us on board in their boats," exclaimed Lady Rowdy Dow. "So here we are; and what do you think, there was Mr. Higson himself fast asleep. My niece Elizabeth, who bounced thoughtlessly into his cabin found him so. She says she was quite shocked, though we tell her we believe that she won a pair of gloves."

"I have no doubt that he will willingly pay them," said Jack, "when he awakes; but he was over-fatigued yesterday, and we did not expect visitors onboard so soon. However, as your ladyship has come for a sail, we will get under weigh immediately, and take a cruise to the eastward."

"Oh, very delightful! Nothing we should like better!" exclaimed her ladyship, a sentiment echoed by most of her companions, who little knew the consequence they were bringing on themselves,

There was a fresh breeze blowing from the south-east, and a strong tide had began to run out, which, meeting it, threw up a no inconsiderable chopping sea. At first all went smoothly enough. Marmaduke was dressing leisurely, and considering whether he should or should not fall in love with the fair Miss Barrackyard. Captain Bulkhead, having only just finished his toilette, came on deck, and seemed somewhat astonished to find it occupied by so many visitors. He looked to windward and then at Jack, in whose eye he saw a wicked twinkle. The cutter

began to lift to the seas. More and more violently she plunged into them, throwing the salt spray over her bows. On she went; the wind increased somewhat, and she heeled over to it. Several times Lady Rowdy Dow seemed inclined to cry out, "Stop the ship!" She did say to Captain Bulkhead, "Could we not be landed on Southsea beach, just to take a walk? It might be very pleasant."

"You would be wet through, my lady, if you made the attempt. Better stick to the ship," answered the captain.

"But I shall be sick if I do," screamed her ladyship, looking unutterable things. "Oh, do help me to the side!"

"With all the pleasure imaginable," said the gallant officer. "It will do your ladyship a world of good, believe me."

Lady Rowdy Dow's example was followed by several other ladies and gentlemen. Miss Barractyard was very far gone when Marmaduke at last crawled on deck. No lady appears to advantage under such circumstances. The beauty the fair Bet possessed was sadly marred by the malady from which she was suffering. Marmaduke thought her perfectly ugly. He was never made uncomfortable by a tossing sea, and was not much disposed to have compassion on those who were.

So far Jack was successful. He had unhooked Marmaduke from one lady, he must now attach him to another. Still he knew the stuff his friend was made of, and that he might very easily be again caught.

"I hope that it will be a long time before we have you aboard here, you old harridan," he said to himself, as he handed Lady Rowdy Dow with many a smile into the boat, and he remarked aloud, "I trust that your ladyship has enjoyed the sail, and that we may have the pleasure of seeing you at the usual hour on the pier—say eleven o'clock. You remember what I told you about the tides. You must be very punctual. Half-past eleven did I say? Ah! that will do."

The next morning Jack was at the pier at half-past nine to receive the Peter Porridges, to whom he gave a hearty welcome. Marmaduke, having been sober the previous evening, was up to receive them. The day was lovely, the water smooth. Several people who had been invited came on board, mostly nonentities.

"Well, I think that we have waited long enough for the Rowdy Dow party," said Jack ostentatiously pulling out his watch. "We shall lose the tide if we wait longer." He swept the pier with a glass, and thought he saw them coming along it, so he exclaimed, "Yes, we have no time to lose. Higson, we must get under weigh. Captain Brown, make sail; we'll be off, if you please. Be smart about it too."

The yacht was soon gliding along towards the mouth of the Southampton

Water. Susan Porridge looked positively pretty, and enjoyed herself very much, and was very smiling and engaging, and thought yachting very delightful, and Mr. Marmaduke Higson a very charming person. If he was not equally enchanted with her, it was because he was too selfish to be enchanted with anybody. The wind fell as they were coming down the Southampton Water, after visiting that town, and Netley, and the new hospital, and then the ebb caught the yacht and swept her down towards the Needles instead of back to Ryde. Brown proposed anchoring, but Jack, who wanted to keep out, would not allow that. All were enjoying themselves, and Marmaduke and Susan were becoming better and better acquainted.

The rage of Lady Rowdy Dow may be better conceived than described when she found that the Ianthe had sailed without her. She vowed vengeance against Marmaduke, for Jack Adair was out of her power; but how she was to wreak it was the question. She soon found out that the Porridges had been preferred before her, and, having learned all about them, guessed at once Jack's object. She knew that he could not be interested in the fair Susan for himself, as he had a wife already. The lady was separated from him but who was most in fault it was difficult to say.

"I'll make the acquaintance of old Porridge, and I think that I shall soon convince him that Mr. Marmaduke Higson may prove a very unsatisfactory son-in-law," thought her ladyship.

Jack, however, was too well accustomed to all the ordinary moves made on the chess-board of life by the characters with whom he was most intimate, not to guess pretty accurately those Lady Rowdy Dow was likely to attempt. He was therefore prepared at once to check-mate her. He took good care, accordingly to warn old Porridge of her character and to abuse her in no measured terms—not more, possibly, than she deserved, but, of all people, the cuts came most unkindly from him.

"But if she is so bad as you say, how comes she to be visited?" asked the innocent Porridge. "I thought people in high society were very particular."

"So some are, unless people have literary fame or a large amount of impudence, and then they defy the world. My advice to you is to keep clear of Lady Rowdy Dow, unless you would contaminate your wife and daughter."

After this the Porridges were constant visitors on board the Ianthe, and were present at most of the regattas inside the island and to the westward. Marmaduke at last, instigated by Jack, proposed. Susan owned that she liked him, but that her papa insisted on inquiring into

certain matters before he allowed her to accept him. Marmaduke assured her that all was right, and that her respected parent could not possibly have any objections; still he thought, taking all things into consideration, that it would be better if she would run away with him. She, however, was firm in declining to do any such thing, and Marmaduke went to Jack for advice. Jack looked rather blue when he heard of this.

"We must brave it out, and perhaps the old fogey will be content with the copy of the will, which you can show him."

Porridge, however, after receiving the will, said he must take time to consider; when Marmaduke went to him for his decision:

"It's all right, Mr. Higson—all right. My daughter Susan is young, and so are you, and if at the end of these five years you are in the same position as you are now, you shall have her with all my heart; but if not, it would never do—never do at all. Three hundred a year wouldn't keep a wife; and whatever I give her must be for the future, in case of a family. I'll look after them, you see."

Marmaduke was completely taken aback. For some time he could make no reply. At last, acknowledging that what Mr. Porridge had learned was true, he begged that the marriage might not be put off to so far distant a time. Old Porridge was, however, inexorable.

"He began to smell a rat," he said to his wife. "He knew enough of these young men of quality, and of the tricks they were up to, to make him cautious. If young Higson cared for Susan, he would wait. If not, why, there were as many good fish in the sea as he, and he'd be no great loss."

CHAPTER IV.

DESCRIBES HOW MARTIN HIGSON SPENT HIS INCOME.

MARTIN HIGSON had seen very little of his cousin during the season. Their yachts occasionally passed each other, when, if near enough, they waved their hands in friendly acknowledgment. They rarely met on shore; when they did, their greeting was brief. Marmaduke generally parted from Martin muttering,

"He's always the same, staid and steady. I don't think that it would be possible to pick a quarrel with that fellow if I tried."

Martin saw that Lady Rowdy Dow and various other people of somewhat exceptionable characters were on board the Ianthe, and wished his

cousin had been more careful in selecting his society ; but expostulations under any circumstances would have been useless.

He himself had had a very pleasant summer cruise. He had the satisfaction of seeing Bertha Arundel restored to health. Her brother, a lieutenant in the navy, whom he liked very much, had joined the party, and the very pleasant, cheery old gentleman whom Marmaduke had seen when the yachts were fitting out, had remained ever since on board. When the yachting season was over, Martin engaged a country house belonging to a family who had long been absent abroad. It was in a populous district, with very few resident gentry, and an ultraritualistic clergyman, who had managed to empty his church of a large portion of those who once attended it. Those who did go were the children of the few gentry in the neighbourhood, and of the lawyer and doctor, and two or three farmers, who considered it fashionable to be High Church. The farmers themselves had stood aloof ; but the wife of one of them, who played on the piano and read Byron, had become a very warm supporter of the new system. The parents of the white-robed choristers, and a few other poor people made up a congregation. The district was full of public-houses, of wretched hovels inhabited by ignorant and destitute families, and profligacy was rampant. Such was the district in which Martin, knowing its character, selected a residence. He got an experienced City missionary down to assist him in visiting the poor in his immediate neighbourhood, whom the clergyman of the parish seldom or never reached. He engaged a large room in an old farm-house for a schoolroom, where he also held services both on the Sunday and on two evenings in the week. He got an intelligent school master and mistress, and assistant, and then went round and personally invited the surrounding peasantry to send their children. He sent the master, mistress, and assistant round also frequently for the same purpose. He introduced the usual amusements and rewards, and, as his school was known to be thoroughly unsectarian, a considerable number of children from the neighbourhood were soon collected at it. The rector, who had not before come near him, on discovering these proceedings, called to enquire by what authority he did these things. He was very gentle in his tone and manner, but thoroughly dictatorial in the substance of what he said.

" I saw that they were very much wanted, that no one had done them, and therefore I did them," answered Martin, firmly and quietly.

" I consider that you should have come to me to ask my permission before you made such changes, and introduced people into the parish who, as far as I can judge, are little better than dissenters—a class of

people too numerous already in England—who, being beyond the pale of our Holy Church, I utterly detest and abhor."

"I can only say that I have acted according to the best of my power and knowledge for the good of those whom I found neglected, poor and ignorant, living in the neighbourhood of my present habitation," answered Martin. "I saw that it was a work that should not be delayed. Every day the population were becoming more vicious and degraded from neglect, and many valuable months would have been lost had I waited to have a schoolroom built as well as a church, which must have been consecrated and endowed. These were my reasons for acting as I have done. I really cannot acknowledge that any excuse need be offered for what was so obviously my duty."

"I consider, sir—pardon me for saying it—that you are thus encouraging and fostering one of the greatest of sins—schism. You are teaching my parishioners to become schismatics, and I must caution them against having any connexion with you. They are of my flock, and I feel that it is my duty to see that none of them be lost," said the rector, gravely.

"I pray and hope that many may be saved by the means which have lately been established in this neighbourhood," said Martin.

"I mean, sir, lost to the Church, lost to the Anglican communion, they will become aliens and outcasts, no longer capable of enjoying the inestimable advantages and privileges which she alone is capable of bestowing," answered the vicar.

"I do not know what they may be," said Martin, with a slight touch of irony in his tone. "I found the people hereabouts ignorant and neglected, and consequently vicious and poor; I wished to improve their religious and moral condition, and I have simply employed the means most ready to my hand."

The rector was so annoyed with Martin, that, forgetful of his usual courtesy of manner, he hesitated about putting out his hand when he took his leave.

Martin did not subscribe to the county hounds nor to the support of a race-course in the neighbourhood on hearing of the vice and profligacy which it encouraged; indeed, he dared to do a number of things which most gentlemen in the county would not do, and to leave undone many more which they did do. Curiously enough, Marmaduke and Jack had taken a hunting-box not far off. When Marmaduke heard of these proceedings of his cousins, he rubbed his hands with delight.

"We shall beat him yet," he exclaimed. "Those ungentlemanly ways of his will condemn him with any sensible man. That's not the way a

gentleman should spend his money. Why, I heard that he has set up a conventicle, and got all sorts of Methodist parsons, and people of that sort, around him. It's a fact, for I made particular inquiries."

"Don't be too sure that that will tell against him," answered Jack. "I know what the ideas of some very first-class people are on those subjects. They may say that your cousin Martin is spending his money very properly."

"But he is not spending it on himself, and no one can say that I am not getting through mine in a gentlemanly manner. I keep hunters, and attend races, and bet occasionally, and shoot, and fish, and own a yacht, and belong to some of the best clubs," exclaimed Marmaduke; "and keep——"

"Well, never mind what else you keep. People have prejudices. You and I may be above them, but I find that it is hopeless to overcome them in others. We must yield to them," observed Jack.

"Now, I tell you again that your safest game is to secure an heiress. The yachting season is coming on. You've let the last two slip by; don't be foolish again. Cut the Porridge affair—that will come to nothing, I see—come over with me to the Paris Exhibition while the yacht is fitting out, and then let us start in earnest. I have my eye on several nice girls who have, or will have, tidy fortunes, and I have laid my plans to get them down to Ryde or Cowes. Others, I have no doubt, will turn up, so you will have your choice. There is a talk of a great naval review, to show the Sultan of Turkey what a number of big, useless, and ill-manned ships we've got; and there'll be the regattas, and other opportunities of inviting people on board without making your intentions obvious. You deserve to die in a workhouse if you don't succeed."

Marmaduke did not agree with his friend's last remark, but he was perfectly ready to enter into the plan he proposed.

CHAPTER V.

SHOWS HOW MARMADUKE HIGSON SPENT HIS INCOME, AND DESCRIBES THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE NAVAL REVIEW.

THE Ianthe and Lone were once more fitted out, and at anchor off Ryde Pier. Their respective owners were on board. Marmaduke had Jack Adair and two other fast friends with him, and Martin his somewhat eccentric old friend Mr. Jeremiah Pendergrast and young Tom Arundel. Mrs. Arundel and her daughter were at Ryde. A great change in their fortunes had lately taken place. A relative of their mother's

had died, and left each of the girls nearly fifty thousand pounds, while by the unforeseen death of others Tom had become heir to a large property. As yet, however he was not in the enjoyment of any part of it, so was glad, independent of other considerations to spend the summer on board Martin's yacht. He had been up to that time indefatigably helping him in his works among the poor of his neighbourhood. Mr. Jeremiah Pendergrast was acquainted, it seemed, with Captain Bulkhead. Marmaduke had invited the captain down to shoot with him, and had offered him a hunter, which was declined for the best of reasons, the naval officer replying that he had plenty of ways of expending himself without running the chance of breaking his neck. While he was at Harum-scarum Lodge, Marmaduke's place, Mr. Pendergrast paid him two or three visits. They had a consultation together, and afterwards the captain expostulated in a kind and friendly way with the master of the house on some of his habits and modes of proceeding. The advice he tendered was not taken in the best spirits, and in consequence of the replies made by Marmaduke, Captain Bulkhead was obliged to leave the house. Before leaving the neighbourhood, the captain called on Mr. Pendergrast. They had a long consultation on some matter of importance; Marmaduke heard of it, and jumped to the somewhat natural conclusion that the two gentlemen were the arbitrators of his fate. He and Jack discussed the subject, and what was best to be done.

"Hang it! I shouldn't have thought those two old fellows good judges of what gentlemen ought to do, or how they ought to spend their money," exclaimed Marmaduke. "The captain is all very well in his way, and a worthy fellow I used to think him, though, had I suspected what he was after, I should have seen him a long way off before I asked him on board the Ianthe. But old Pendergrast has, I should think by his looks, been quill-driving all his life, and what can he know about such matters?"

Satan leads people who are willing to be led into mischief, and then mockingly leaves them to reap the consequences of their sin. If they are not willing, he has no power over them. Jack Adair, acting the part of one of his Satanic Majesty's emissaries, having got Marmaduke into a mess, was very much inclined to desert him.

"You see, Higson," he said (he always called Marmaduke, Higson when he was going to be disagreeable), "it is not what we think is gentlemanly, but what those your old uncle selected as umpires may consider so. I have been trying all along to impress this on you. I warned you from the first with regard to Bulkhead. You insisted that he was a very good fellow, and so I confess I thought him. Yet my first impressions were right, I fear. He turns out a mere spy on our actions—

a very ungentlemanly employment, I consider it. Still he has seen more than he should have seen, and my opinion is that you will lose. Your only chance is to marry well while you are afloat. I give you this advice once more and for all : you had better send for your mother and sister to help you, for I'll be hanged if I can much longer. There's young Sir Joseph Trowson just coming of age. I was a friend of his father's, and I've looked after him, going down to see him at school, and at his tutor's and at college, till he got rusticafed ; and now, he has some fifty thousand pounds in ready money, he will require my assistance to get through it. You see, Higson, my good fellow, that I can't stick to you much longer ; so I say again, ' Make hay while the sun shines.' "

Such was the state of affairs at the commencement of the yachting season of the year 1867. A considerable number of yachts were fitted out early, and brought up off Ryde and Cowes, while Spithead presented a far more animated scene than usual from the collection of men-of-war which had come from all parts of the coast to perform their parts in the grand naval review intended to impress the mind of the Sultan of Turkey with the power and grandeur of England's navy.

The *Ione* was fitted out before the *Ianthe*. Martin took up his abode on board. He had no notions of having a comfortable vessel or anything else without making thorough use of it. Had he consulted only his own inclination, he would have made use of his vessel to take some distant trip, and to visit a number of interesting places. He, however, liked to give pleasure to others, and seldom went out without a pleasant party on board. Mrs. and the Miss Arundels were invited to come whenever they could. There were some merry Miss Gascoins and two or three gentlemen, school or college friends of Martin's.

Lady Rowdy Dow, who had come down with her niece, Miss Barrac-
yard, made a stenuous effort to get on board, and was very angry when
she was foiled.

" I shall succeed better with the other Mr. Higson, and marry Elizabeth he shall—of that I am determined," she said to herself.

Martin felt very happy. Hitherto he had had no reasons to believe, so he fancied, that Ethel Arundel preferred him to any one else ; now he could not mistake the blush of pleasure which rose on her cheek when he approached, increasing when he spoke to her in that winning way which was natural to him.

The *Ione* was standing towards the fleet, anchored at Spithead, and which already presented a very imposing appearance as they lay extending in a long line from west to east, consisting of lofty line of battle ships

and frigates, relics of the old days of yore, invulnerable iron-clads turret-ships, and gun-boats. To the west of the line were to be seen stately ships, whose names as well as whose appearance reminded the spectators of the proudest days of England's naval glory. There lay the Victoria, three-decker, of 102 guns ; Duncan, 81 ; Donegal, 81 ; Revenge, 78 ; Saint George, 72 ; Royal George, 72 ; Lion, 60 ; Irresistible, 60 ; Dauntless, 31 ; each, perhaps, three or four times the size of their old namesakes, with an immensely greater weight of metal. Then there was the Mersey, a wooden frigate, once one of the most powerful armed in the navy, now so greatly surpassed that she would be almost helpless if engaged with others since built. There was the Royal Sovereign, cupola-ship, of mighty power, commanded by Captain Cooper Phipps Coles, the inventor of the cupola or turret style of arming. There was Pallas, an armoured screw-corvette ; the Sutlej, 35, screw-frigate, just arrived from the Pacific ; the Warrior, and Valiant, screw-frigates, the twin-screw gun-boat Viper, and some gun-boats.

The Lone stood as close to the ships as the wind would allow, to give those on board an opportunity of examining them. The day was lovely ; the breeze just such as yachtsmen like when they have ladies on board, sufficient to send the vessels briskly through the water, and yet not to make it too rough to be pleasant. Martin thought that Ethel had never looked so beautiful and animated as she listened to his account of the strange sea monsters which they saw floating before them.

"It cannot be necessary for me to wait till the end of five years to propose," he said to himself. "Though I cannot make a settlement, I can insure my life ; and should I ultimately fail to retain my present income, I will work like a Trojan to maintain her in comfort. I will tell her the exact state of the case. She shall understand the whole of it clearly, and then I will consult Mr. Pendergrast as to whether he thinks that we may safely marry at once."

Martin thought the plan of proceeding so good that he could not help putting it into execution at once. Ethel listened to his account of the will-matter very calmly, but though much interested as if it only concerned him. When he began to talk of his hopes and wishes her manners was very different. At first she said ;

"Oh, Mr. Higson, surely you need have no fear about the matter ; what better way could you possibly have devised of spending your income ? I do not think that any one can object to your having this yacht. We have, indeed, reason to be grateful to you for the use you have made of it."

After this she was at first very silent ; she seemed taken by surprise,

yet when she did speak she said nothing to make him unhappy, still less had he cause to complain of her looks or her manner. She merely asked him one question. Did he know from the first of the clause in the will? He confessed that he did but that he would rather not have known of it. He had not acted in the slightest degree differently to what he would have done had no such clause existed. He desired simply to follow the dictates of his conscience. Under any circumstances he should have felt that he was the steward of the property committed to his charge, that he might make the best use of it in his power. He might not have expended the whole of it, that he would not say. Ethel looked up and smiled.

"I have no doubt, then, if the umpires are right-thinking men, that you will be considered to have spent the income according to the desire of the testator," she said, in a low voice; "I, at all events, am certain that it has been rightly expended."

The rest of those on board were too much engaged in watching the fleet to notice what was taking place. The fleet stretched out a considerable way to the eastward, and then stood back under all sail.

"Gaze your fill at the spectacle, young people—gaze your fill!" exclaimed Mr. Pendergrast. "After this year you may, perhaps, never see such a one again. By the time another British fleet is collected in these waters, all those magnificent line-of-battle ships—vastly superior as they are to any Rodney, Howe or Nelson led to victory—will have disappeared, or be looked upon as mere useless ornaments."

The Lone ran back towards Ryde before the fleet put about. Those on her deck, therefore, had the opportunity of seeing the ships as they emerged one after the other in line out of the smoke created by their own fires, gradually becoming more and more distinct, till the whole fleet hove in sight, and returned to their respective anchorages. Martin felt very happy as he escorted his friends on shore, when they gladly accepted his invitation to come on board for the review.

CHAPTER VI.

DESCRIBES THE NAVAL REVIEW AND HOW MARMADUKE HIGSON'S
YACHTING WAS BROUGHT TO AN END.

MARMADUKE Higson was enjoying to the full the *dolce far niente* of yachting life, as his yacht lay off Ryde. Jack Adair had deserted him. He had important business, he said, and must go. Hitherto Jack, who

had talents for business which would have secured him an honourable independence in any mercantile pursuits he might have undertaken, had looked after all Marmaduke's affairs—that is to say, he had taken care that he should have an ample supply of money whenever money was necessary, but had systematically left unpaid all bills which he could avoid paying. Jack knew nothing of this. Hitherto all had gone on smoothly. The yacht was in good order, and well managed, and he did not trouble himself about anything further. He was awoke up one morning out of this blissful state of existence by the appearance of the master Captain Brown, in his cabin, with a bundle of ominous looking documents in his hands.

"What are all those scraps of paper?" asked Marmaduke, eyeing them with no pleasant look.

"Just accounts, sir, for things we've had for the yacht; and they say that they must be settled. Mr. Adair told me to give them to you. You'd do it off hand."

"What's the amount?" asked Marmaduke.

"Four or five hundred pounds, sir; but I'm not quite certain," answered Captain Brown.

"Four or five hundred pounds!" exclaimed Marmaduke, aghast
"What can it all be for?"

"Why, there's the sail and ropemaker's account, they come to a pretty goodish bit of money. You see, sir, we've had a new foresail, and we split our second jib, and the running gear is new of necessity. I never take charge of a gentleman's yacht when I cannot trust to that. Then there's the blacksmith's account, and we've had sixty pounds of paint, and oil and turpentine in proportion; and we sprung our topmast and square topsail yard, and we got a new bowsprit, for I didn't quite like its looks. Then we had to get a few fathoms of iron chain, and there was grease, and oakum, and other stores, and a dozen new blocks, and paint-brushes and paint-pots, and some buckets and mops; and two of the boats wanted repairing, and fresh oars. Lord bless you, sir, bills are quickly run up for a yacht.

Marmaduke groaned. It was a self-evident truth. He took the papers. With Brown's assistance he cast up the totals. It was not worth while to look over the accounts themselves. He knew how to draw a cheque, so he drew one on his banker's and told Brown to get it cashed, and to pay the different amounts. It was the easiest way of settling the matter. He did not consider what balance he might have left at his banker's. He knew that he had entered into a good many expenses on shore and he feared that they might not have been settled.

He had a good stock of wine on board, not yet paid for. To stave off all these disagreeable thoughts he applied to it pretty frequently.

One of the days that the fleet sailed out to exercise, Marmaduke had got what he called happy pretty early in the morning, when Lady Rowdy Dow and her niece, and a good many of her select friends, appeared on the Ryde Pier. Marmaduke, finding himself solitary on board, had landed to pick up a genial companion or two. He intended only to ask gentlemen. Seeing, however, Lady Rowdy Dow, he said to himself, "I'll ask the old girl on board. I rather think that I have shown her scant courtesy of late. The invitation—extended to the whole party—was very readily accepted. Bet Barracyard looked very blooming, and highly pleased.

Away sailed the Ianthe in company with a number of other yachts, with a gay party on board. Who could suppose that her owner was not one of the happiest of men? He looked gay enough as he whispered into the ear of the fair Elizabeth and chatted freely with Lady Rowdy Dow. Marmaduke had a good luncheon prepared, and no stint of liquor. Lady Rowdy Dow partook of the latter largely, but she had a strong head, and it only made her a little more frisky than usual. Marmaduke, following her ladyship's example, imbibed pretty freely, but he had a weak head, and consequently very soon did not know exactly what he was about. He had only a notion that he had thought Bet Barracyard very charming, that he had pressed her hand, and said something rather particular, and that she had said yes, and sunk into his arms in the cabin, and that just then Lady Rowdy Dow had come down the companion-ladder—perhaps she had been watching for the auspicious moment through the skylight. She congratulated the young couple warmly; highly approved of the match, and saying something about

Happy's the wooing that's not long a-doing,

observed that she should call Lord Rowdy down to confirm all she had said.

"Then I'm in for it, Bet; in for it, old girl," said Marmaduke, in a maudlin tone. "It can't be helped; it might be much worse. When shall it be, eh? To-morrow, or next day? The sooner the better."

The young lady replied that she had no objection; she would ask her aunt if it could be so soon. She had kept a fortnight's residence; she didn't want any fuss with a wedding-breakfast, and all that sort of thing; she could soon find some bridesmaids if they were necessary, and the whole affair would be settled. Marmaduke, in his then con-

dition, was highly delighted; and when he went on deck, to the amusement of some of his guests and to the disgust of others, was highly demonstrative with the fair Elizabeth, who, however, took all his attentions as her due. The visitors on board the Ianthe were also, like our friends in the Lone, watching the fleet, as the proud ships under sail and steam moved back to their moorings. They were all anticipating a still more delightful day for the grand review, when the Queen of England and her Oriental guests were to be present. Clouds, however, began to gather in the hitherto clear sky, and the wind, which had been from the east, and, if not balmy, blowing at least with gentle force, shifted to the south-west, and came in fierce and fitful gusts. Sunday it blew stronger, and Monday and Tuesday stronger still, with occasionally pretty heavy showers of rain. At length the eventful day arrived. The morning broke dark and lowering. For a time the rain kept off, but soon dense storms swept up the Solent, and heavy squalls, which compelled the numberless yachts cruising here and there to keep under snug canvas. The monster ships lay at their anchors—three-deckers, ironclads, cupola-ships, and gun-boats of various sizes and forms, any one of the ironclads, with their tremendous artillery, capable of sending to the bottom the whole of the mighty fleet Nelson led to victory off Trafalgar. Flags flew from the mastheads of the ships, and steam yachts lay within the mouth of Portsmouth harbour to receive the royal and other visitors. Then, as soon as the Pacha of Egypt arrived, the guns from the fleet began to belch out their thunders. Still more furiously they fired away when the Sultan of Turkey reached the yacht destined to show him the display of naval power England had prepared for his amusement. When Britain's Christian Queen met her Mahomedan guests on the green sea, once more the guns with redoubled energy sent forth peal after peal. Then the yachts with the royal standards steamed along the line of ships which remained all the day at their anchors, and the Sultan sent a message to the English admiral to express the pleasure he felt at what he had seen—a pleasure which would have been considerably lessened had he been compelled to go out to sea on that stormy day to witness the evolutions which had been proposed for his amusement.

Next the gun-boats got under weigh, and took up positions before Southsea Castle and Fort Monckton, at which they fired away furiously for some time, till people grew tired of the sound, and finally the ships lighted up their ports and tried to let off fireworks, but the wind blew them out, and dense showers coming on prevented the illuminations from being seen at a distance.

The Ianthe had come out with her usual guests on board, but Lady

Rowdy Dow, in spite of the luncheon in store, soon cried out that she must be put on shore again. Most of the rest of the party followed her example, and even Miss Barractyard, though she held out to the last, at length gave in, and landed with her aunt. She begged Marmaduke, however, to follow as soon as the review was over, which of course he promised to do.

Scarcely, however, had he returned on board and ordered luncheon, than a shore-boat came alongside, and a roughish-looking man, in a very rough coat, stepping unceremoniously on deck, walked briskly up to him. Exhibiting a silver oar, which he produced from under his coat, he said :

"Sorry to stop your cruise, sir, but I have this warrant out against you for certain debts owing to several gentlemen of respectability. If you choose to pay the money, well and good. If not, you must come along with me,"

"Pay ! Why, I haven't got five pounds on board, but I'll give you a cheque on my bankers to settle the matter."

"Sorry, sir, that I can't take a cheque, seeing as how your bankers haven't got five pounds either," answered the man.

Marmaduke considered whether he should call on his crew to assist in putting the officer of the law below, and carrying him off to the coast of France. The attempt was too hazardous. It was more than possible that they might not obey him. He agreed to accompany the stranger, and putting on his thick Flushing coat as he left the yacht, he told Brown that he expected to be back in a day or two. The boat stood for Portsmouth. A heavy sea was running. A violent squall struck her as she was more than half-way across. The eyes of all, both on the shore and on board the vessels, were turned towards the fleet. No one was watching the small boat battling with the waves. In an instant, without a moment's warning, over went the boat, and the hapless beings were thrown struggling among the foaming seas. In vain the boatmen who were the lightest clad endeavoured to regain the boat—the strongest swimmer would have had but little chance in that short chopping sea—the rest sunk almost immediately. With a despairing cry the first gave up the contest, and the boat, unnoticed, drifted down with the tide.

When Marmaduke did not return on board his yacht, Lady Rowdy Dow became very irate, and declared that he had cruelly jilted her niece. Jack Adair observed that he was doing the wisest thing he could under the circumstances—keeping out of the way of his creditors. The truth is not yet generally known. Martin's marriage with Miss Arundel was announced before the end of the month, and Mr. Pengergrast and

Captain Bulkhead were known to have congratulated him warmly on the wise choice he had made, and to have assured him that, in their opinion, he had spent his income in every way properly and becoming the character of an English gentleman.

THE RIVAL YACHTSMEN;

OR, WHO'LL WIN ?

CHAPTER I.

The rising sun shone brightly one clear morning in the summer of 1865, on a fleet anchored off Ryde pier, such as Englishmen alone can boast of possessing. It was formed of pleasure vessels, to which has been given the Dutch-derived, uncouth-sounding name of yachts. There were schooners, yawls and cutters, a steamer, and a lugger or two—all gallant craft, graceful and symmetrical in form, and not only noted for speed, but many of them capable of breasting the stormiest waves of the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans.

As the sound of the morning gun boomed across the waters from Spithead up went to the mastheads the white, red, and blue burgees of the Cowes Squadron—the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, the Western Club, the Thames, the Irish, the Harwich, and many other clubs, distinguished by their various devices. Only now and then, however, could more than the colours of the flags be seen; for lovely as was the morning, there existed, and there was promise of the continuance of, what yachtsmen especially dislike—a calm.

There must have been between sixty and seventy yachts, besides two men-of-war brigs and other craft, clustered together off Ryde. The town, standing on a gentle slope, was seen rising gradually from the blue water with its streets, and terraces, and scattered villas, surrounded by green fields and groves. On one side appeared the woods of Binstead, and on the other those of St. John's and Sea View, while its handsome club-house, of which it has reason to be proud, was one of the most prominent features in the landscape; and then its pier—boldly extending far into the channel—unrivalled among piers, if not in size, in interesting associations to many a fair visitor and gallant yachtsman.

The yachts themselves deserve more particular mention. There was the Aline, a superb schooner of 216 tons, owned by the commodore of the Ryde Club, Mr. Thellusson ; the Witchcraft, a very witch in appearance, with raking masts and varnished sides ; the Egeria, of 152 tons, built by Wanhill, of Poole, a powerful craft, certain to put forth speed with the wind abeam or astern, provided there was enough of it ; the Albertine, her equal in size and beauty, and likely in a race to prove a formidable rival—all of them with straight bowsprits, except the Witchcraft, which carried a jib-boom. Then there was the Evadne, the Titania, the Constance, the Lotus, the Avoca, the Daphne, the Dawn, the Gleam, and the Blue Bell—names dainty and feminine in sound, and characteristic of the lovely craft they designated. These were schooners, but there were cutters also, once a rig far outnumbering the former. Their names were not less captivating, the Christabel, the Marina, the Amulet, the Lurline, the Hirondelle, the Moonbeam, the Physche, the Niobe—all beautiful creatures of the ship-builder's art, well worthy of the names they bore.

Among the yachts already mentioned were two fine schooners of about the same size, the Eugenie and the Euphrosyne. It would have been difficult to decide which was the most beautiful, or which was likely to prove the fastest sailer. As the morning advanced, curling wreaths of smoke ascended from the brightly polished funnels in the forepart of the vessels ; gentlemen in dressing gowns appeared on their decks, gazing around them and inhaling the fresh sea air ; some few, the sides being rigged with ladders, plunged overboard to take a still more invigorating swim. In a short time other heads appeared above the companion hatches—salutations were exchanged between neighbouring vessels, and remarks on the probable state of the weather during the day ; then boats began to move about, bringing friends off to breakfast, or carrying yachtsmen on shore. The more eager, wishing to take a cruise or bound tideward, set their sails and whistled for a breeze, while the greater number of yachts gave no signs of moving, their owners and their guests coming on shore to meet the groups of smiling belles which were seen trooping along the pier in every variety of costume, from the last Paris fashion to that of blue serge and a tarpaulin hat, with an anchor or the name of some yacht stamped in gold on the ribbon in front ; some to take their morning walk on the deck-like expanse at the pier-end, or in the hopes of enjoying a cruise in one of the fairy-like craft at anchor before them. But it is time that we should say something more about the Eugenie and Euphrosyne.

CHAPTER II.

We have to account for the appearance of the two schooners just named off Ryde. It thus happened. Thomas Digby Langston stood on the hustings, a candidate for senatorial honours, one hand in his bosom, and the other waving wildly. Below him were the free and independent electors of the borough of Muddleton, fiercely vociferating, breaking each other's heads, and casting dirt metaphorically and actually into each other's mouths and eyes. There were two other candidates, Sir Stephen Harley and Mr. Francis Ainslie, who in their turn were subjected to a similar fire of groans, hisses, and hootings. Langston gave up the attempt to speak, and Sir Stephen commenced. Occasionally a few phrases were heard. (Renewed applause.) The foulest and basest of means—(Loud cheers) wholesale venality and corruption. “Bravo!” Laughter. “Hear! hear!”) He attempted to treat you, free and independent—(Greater applause than before. “Bravo!” “Yes! Yes!”)—as if you were the common pot-walloppers of some unreformed borough. (Loud hisses. Cries of “Down with him! We'll have none of such!”) There was an unusual silence. “For my part,” continued Sir Stephen, “had this man been my most intimate friend, I should have cut him dead. Happily I have no connection with him, nor will I, if I can help it.” (Cries of “No more won't we! No more won't we!”) At which the baronet bowed and smiled approval.) Mr. Francis Ainslie followed in the same strain, and was even less complimentary to his opponent and his opinions.

Honest Tom Langston could scarcely believe his senses on hearing these phrases uttered by men with whom he had not an hour before been shaking hands in the most friendly manner. But Tom was a true Briton; his motives were as pure as his escutcheon, and although he did not think it necessary, in imitation of the lately notorious Colonel Blunderbuss, to call out his opponents, he demanded a poll, gave his agents leave to spend liberally, and was defeated. His opponents had bribed higher. Disgusted with the world, with himself, with things in general, and with the contemptible borough of Muddleton in particular, he was seated in his room in his hotel, lately so profusely decked with his colours, having just discharged the last of the accounts which had come showering in on him, when a waiter appeared with a card. “Dick Chase. “That's fortunate!” he exclaimed to himself. “Show the gentleman up.”

In a few seconds a jovial, well-conditioned, blue-eyed, middle-aged person entered the room, and cordially shook hands with the would-have-been senator.

"Only just heard of what you were about," he rattled on—"too late to be of use. Never mind. I wouldn't be in parliament for a peerage *in posse*, and ten thousand a year *in esse*, so I do not pity you. You have wound up all the disgusting work that you have had to go through, I hope. Bah! The whole system is a disgrace to our national character. All places are alike. There is a borough in the south of England represented by my kith and kin for centuries, and would have been by your humble servant at the present time, had not a fellow with a long purse appeared. He emptied the said purse like a cornucopia as the electors boasted, and came in with flying colours. Among other dodges he ordered two yachts of the principal shipbuilder, which he certainly did not want for himself. Our only satisfaction was calling them "Bribery" and "Corruption"—names which stuck to them for many a day. But enough of the abominable subject. Now to matter of more importance. I hurried down to tell you that I have seen a schooner lately launched, of a hundred and forty tons, which, in my opinion, will beat everything she meets with. She is called the Eugenie, in compliment to the Empress of the French, I suppose. You'll be delighted with her. There is no better remedy for every contretemps in love or polities than yachting. Take my advice, and buy her forthwith. I have made all preliminary arrangements, and by a few scratches of the pen she is yours. Say but the word, and we'll be away from this for the Isle of Wight by the evening train.

"Thanks, my dear fellow; you've done capitally. I'll take your advice, and throw dull care to the dogs," answered Langston, springing to his feet. "I should like to beat that fellow Ainslie, who boasts, I hear, of the wonders of his Euphrosyne, and though he has defeated me on the hustings, I'll try to take the shine out of him on the blue sea."

"Capital! A bright idea," exclaimed Chase, who was anxious to give his friend some object of interest. "I will telegraph and secure the yacht."

"Do. I have a few matters to settle in town, and will join you in a day or two, if you will undertake to get all necessary stores and provisions on board," said Langston.

"With all my heart," answered Chase. "But I say, Tom, if I sail with you, don't keep pottering about that confounded Ryde pier all the summer, or allow the crinoline-wearing portion of the human species to take possession of the craft."

"Oh, of course—certainly not. Nothing of the feminine gender shall step on board—not a bumboat nor a washerwoman come alongside. I'll ask Granville to join us; he has a perfect horror of petticoats, except in the drawing-room, and we'll go foreign as soon as you can get the craft ready for sea," was Langston's reply.

"Oh, I know him, if you mean Granville of the Guards. Has a fair amount of brains, and is a capital fellow, barring being a little too much of the fine gentleman occasionally, I used to think," remarked Chase.

"Oh, the salt water will soon wash all that out of him, should he not have laid it aside with his shore-going toggery," said Langston.

And so the party of three confirmed bachelors, as they believed themselves, was made up for a long cruise to foreign shores.

In three days Langston and Chase met on board the Eugenie, and, sailing from Cowes, brought up close, as it happened, to the Euphrosyne, off Ryde pier, where Granville had begged they would meet him.

CHAPTER III.

"Nor a hair in all the 'eavens, sir, and, to my mind, nor there won't be," answered Silas Dore, the master of the Eugenie, with a look of intense disgust, in reply to a question Langston had put to him as to the state of the weather.

"Then we'll go on shore, Chase, and stretch our legs. There appear to be numbers of people on the pier, and we shall probably fall in with some acquaintance, and hear the news," observed Langston.

"With all my heart, but take care that none of the petticoats inveigel you to take them on board; an end to our peace and quiet if you do," said Chase in a warning tone.

"No fear, most sage Mentor," answered Langston, laughing; "even the most unnautical of females would scarcely expect to take a sail in a calm."

"That's the very thing. They don't want to take a sail, but they would like to come on board and turn everything upside down for very mischief's sake," urged the old bachelor.

The gig was ordered, and the friends pulled towards the pier, criticising, as they glided on, the various yachts they passed. They themselves did not altogether escape criticism in return, especially from some

of the fairer beings on board the vessels. It was, however, probably favourable. The boat was a model of symmetry, the crew were well dressed, fine fellows, and pulled well, and Langston was good looking, and showed by his steering that he was no novice, and nothing could be more perfect than his and his friend's yachting costume. Several pair of bright eyes watched them as they approached the pier-head.

"Tell the master to send the gig and cutter on shore at two o'clock, and to look out for Captain Granville, who will come by the Portsmouth steamer," said Langston to his coxswain, as he stepped out of the boat. "He knows the name of the yacht. Take his traps on board, and say that we hope to be down soon to meet him, unless he prefers going off at once."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the answer, and the boat returned to the yacht, while the two gentlemen strolled carelessly across the pier, glancing here and there to ascertain if among the crowd of loungers any of their acquaintances were to be found. They were soon recognised by several of the laughing throng.

"How de do, Langston?" "How de do, Tom?" "How de do, Chase?" "We did not expect to see you here, Mr. Langston." "Dear me, Mr. Langston, what an agreeable surprise." "What, Chase, old fellow, glad to see you." These and similar salutations resounded on all sides, and were appropriately responded to. Whenever Langston stopped to speak to any young lady of more than ordinary attractions, he was sure to feel Chase pulling at his arm, and whispering, "Take care; we shall get into a scrape if we don't push on." At the end of the pier is a structure of some size, affording shelter to a considerable number of persons under its roof. On the roof is a platform, over which an awning is spread. It is reached by a flight of steps, and from it not only the vessels in the distance, but all that goes forward on the esplanade below, can be conveniently observed. In front of the building are rows of benches, seldom left unoccupied in warm weather. Suddenly turning an angle of the building, a somewhat stout lady in a many-coloured costume appeared before them, followed by four young ladies, who, though tall, were of much slimmer proportions.

"Lady Garry O'Enne! how do you do?" exclaimed Langston, looking, however, as if he would gladly have passed by without speaking.

"My dear Mr. Langston, I am delighted to see you," cried the lady, putting out her hands, "so will be the girls. Mr. Langston, my dears.

We thought we saw you coming from a beautiful yacht just now Nora said it was, and Kathleen said it wasn't, you, and some of us sided with Nora, and some with Kathleen; and sure, Nora, the darlin', was right, you see."

"Yes, I landed from my yacht but a few minutes ago," said Langston. As he spoke, he felt Dick Chase give him a monitory pressure of the arm.

"How very fortunate, indeed," exclaimed Lady Garry O'Enne, "isn't it, girls? It was just now we were saying that we wished we had some friend with a fine yacht who would take us out, and behold you turn up, Mr. Langston. Nora, you see, is quite a sailor already, can row a boat and steer, and has first-rate sea legs, so Lieutenant O'Shaughnessy, of the Sparrow cutter, off our coast, used to declare."

Nora, who was a decidedly pretty girl, with bright flashing eyes and a rich colour, pouted somewhat at this latter remark, but acknowledged that if there was one thing more than another she would like, it would be to be owner of a fine yacht. What could Langston do, unless he had not possessed a particle of gallantry in his composition? Dick Chase's rotund countenance grew long as he heard his friend invite her ladyship and her daughters on board, should a breeze spring up in the afternoon.

"So much for good resolutions. It's what these young fellows always do. There's no depending on them," he muttered to himself.

"We'll not fail you, Mr. Langston," said Lady Garry O'Enne; "will we, girls? They've champagne, and all sorts of good things on board these big yachts," she whispered to the daughter nearest her, while Langston was addressing Nora, who had, somehow or other, slipped out from among her sisters.

The Misses O'Enne were experienced tacticians. It is easy for a gentleman to get away from a crowd of ladies, but he must be hard of heart who can leave a pretty girl to walk alone. He thus of necessity made several turns with her, Chase being surrounded by her sisters, to whom Langston had introduced him. They were all, however, brought together once more by the arrival of a steamer, from whose decks a number of people were emerging on to the pier. Among them was a group evidently forming one party—a gentleman, two elderly ladies, and three young ones. Their costume, the expression of their countenances, the way they walked, the character of their luggage, and their attendants, all bespoke them to belong to the upper class of society. The gentleman and elder ladies exchanged greeting with Lady Garry O'Enne, who

seemed highly pleased to meet them. Langston was particularly struck with the beauty of one of the young ladies. She had a fair and delicate complexion, light auburn hair, a refined expression of countenance, and a graceful, slight figure. He gave a glance round at Nora. Her power was gone in a moment, though many men would have infinitely preferred her beauty to the less imposing character of that of the stranger. Langston immediately asked Lady O'Enne the name of her acquaintance. She replied,

"Mr. and Mrs. Sidmouth, their two daughters, and Mrs. Sidmouth's sister; and I heard Mr. Sidmouth call the third young lady, the fair girl, Miss May, so I suppose that's her name. We met them at Scarborough, and several times on the Rhyne last year. I will introduce you, for they are fond of yachting, and you'll like them; I know."

Before Langston could have declined the offer he was introduced to the Sidmouth party, with many an eulogium, as the owner of a beautiful yacht. Directly afterwards he found himself close to the pretty stranger, and enjoyed ten minutes' conversation before he handed her and her friends into the tramway carriage which was to convey them up the pier. An invitation had been given and accepted to take a cruise in the Eugenie. Dick Chase began to look positively glum.

"It's a long way to have to walk up the pier and back again for luncheon," observed Lady Garry O'Enne, as she stood eyeing the Eugenie, from whose galley funnel a thin wreath of smoke was ascending, indicative of cooking forward. "Now, there's my Nora there, a delicate young creature, it's almost too much for her to walk up and down twice in the day, and yet we don't like to miss being here in the afternoon.

"I should be delighted if you and your daughters would come off to luncheon," Langston felt himself forced to say. "But I do not know what we shall have to offer you. Chase has paid more attention to the commissariat than I have."

"Ship's biscuits, and cheese and porter," growled out Dick. "We haven't much dainty fare fit for fair ladies, I'm afraid."

"Oh, we are in no way particular about eating, my girls and I, Mr. Chase, and the sea air gives a mighty fine appetite, as I dare say you find, Mr. Langston," said her ladyship, turning first to one gentleman and then to the other.

Dick's prognostications were fulfilled when the ladies got on board, for while luncheon was preparing the young ladies ran about, putting their heads into all the cabins, and examining and admiring everything.

The luncheon was very different to what Dick had promised. The steward quickly produced soup, and game, and potted vegetables, and salmon, and preserves and cakes, and hock, champagne and claret, and other delicacies too numerous to be mentioned, till her ladyship would almost have hugged Langston in her delight, and she resolved to lunch on board the Eugenie as often as she could. In vain Dick Chase endeavoured to get rid of the party when the boats were sent for Captain Granville. They had no intention of going, so he urged the master, Dore, to hurry off the captain, to help him in his extremity.

Dore stood watching the passengers disembarking from the Portsmouth steamer, and satisfied himself that Captain Granville was among them by the portmanteaus and chests and bags and cases which he saw handed up marked with his name. The mystery of the number was cleared up when the captain's gentleman appeared, and explained that one case contained a set of blacking brushes, and another bottles of blacking for future use, that a third was a case of eau-de-Cologne, and so forth.

"It's lucky as how we brought both boats," muttered Dore; "one wouldn't carry all these traps. I wonder how one gentleman can want so many things."

Granville, however, had nothing finikin about him in appearance, but was a remarkably fine-looking fellow. While his traps were being handed into the boat, he strolled across the pier. He shook hands with several people, and bowed to others. He was going towards the boat, when he saw a gentleman and three young ladies coming along the pier.

"The Sidmouths; I must speak to them," he said to himself. " Didn't know that they were here."

He shook hands with Mr. Sidmouth and his daughters, and was about to be introduced to their companion, when another gentleman came up and addressed her. She made him known to Mr. Sidmouth as Mr. Ainslie, a friend of her father's. Mr. Ainslie seemed to take it for granted that he should be well received, and saying that he was the owner of the Euphrosyne, invited them to come on board. The Miss Sidmouths and their companion would have been very happy, but they were already engaged to take a sail on board the Eugenie. Mr. Ainslie looked annoyed. "Then allow me to take you on board in my boat," he said, after he had expressed his regret in due form.

This offer they were also obliged to decline, as their mother and aunt had not yet come down, and Mr. Langston had promised to send his boat for them. Granville, on hearing what had been said, and seeing

both the Eugenie's boats loaded with his luggage, hurried off to her. He was cordially received by his friends, and welcomed by Lady Garry O'Enne and her daughters, who were duly impressed with his importance by seeing his gentleman's gentleman and the amount of baggage under his charge.

"By-the-bye," he said to Langston, "I saw a desperate attempt made by a Mr. Ainslie, the owner of a yacht, to carry off some friends of yours, and as one of them is remarkably pretty, and the others are nice girls, I would advise you to get them on board forthwith."

That there might be no mistake, Langston hurried to the pier himself, where he found the younger portion of the Sidmouth party, but, as the mamma and aunt had not come down, he was compelled to spend some time there. He saw his late opponent pull off with a boatful of ladies and gentlemen towards the Euphrosyne. Many of the owners of yachts who had been sauntering about, grumbling at the calm, now began to move more briskly, and their countenances to brighten. The cat-saws on the water came more frequently, the burgees flew out from the mast-heads, and vessels which had only been tiding by, gathered steerage way. At length the elder ladies appeared, and Langston handed the party into the boat. As they were going off, a young midshipman who had just crossed from Portsmouth came up to Mrs. Sidmouth, and, as he seemed to be a friend, Langston invited him on board. Dore had in the mean time, seeing the breeze coming, been getting sail on the schooner.

The master of the Euphrosyne had been doing the same. As it happened, both vessels got under weigh precisely at the same moment. The breeze freshened. All sail was made on both vessels.

"I should like now to see what we can say to that 'ere schooner the Frowsynee, as they calls her, sir," observed Dore to Dick Chase, "I don't think Mr. Langston would be sorry to give her the go-by, and we'll show her that the Eugenie has a good pair of legs of her own."

The two vessels were at the time heading in towards the outer buoy of the Brambles, heeling over to a fine fresh northerly breeze.

"We will stand on till we can round Leap buoy, then run across to Cowes Castle, and back to Ryde pier," said Langston to Dore.

"A very good course, sir. Fisher, the master of t'other schooner, will know what we are at, and he'll take the same, depend on't," was the answer.

The guests on board both yachts soon discovered what was going forward, and began to wish, as they watched each other, that their respective craft would leave the other astern. The Miss Garry O'Ennes were especially loud in expressing their hopes.

"Have we not got your good wishes for the success of the Eugenie?" he said to the Sidmouth's fair friend.

"Yes, certainly, but I confess that I ought also to be interested in the success of Mr. Ainslie's yacht, as he is a fellow-member with my father for Muddleton, and his friend."

Langston's countenance showed his astonishment.

"What! I thought you were a Miss May," he gasped out, remembering certain expressions he had not long before heard.

"My Christian name is May—I am a daughter of Sir Stephen Harley," answered the young lady. "Are you the Mr. Langston who stood for Muddleton?"

"I am that unfortunate individual," answered the owner of the Eugenie, feeling more anxious than ever to beat the Euphrosyne.

Still, in spite of himself, Tom Langston watched May Harley with intense interest.

"She is a lovely creature!" he said to himself more than once. "And good and aimable as she is beautiful. I must win her."

The stronger the breeze blew and the faster the yachts sailed, the more the ladies enjoyed the fun. The Sidmouths' friend, the young midshipman whom they had formally introduced as Mr. William Smart, but more familiarly called Billy Smart, entered warmly into the contest. He was not slow in passing his opinion on the Euphrosyne and on those on board her, looking on them all in the light of enemies. He was not particular who he addressed—sometimes Mrs. Sidmouth, at others Granville, or Chase, or the young ladies.

"That Ainslie is a conceited fellow, in my opinion," he remarked in Miss Harley's hearing. "Thinks that everything belonging to himself must be first-rate. It's with him always, 'My place in the country—my horse—my club—my yacht.' Now he is in parliament, he will boil over; when he gets a wife what a splendidiferous creature she must be! He'll burst altogether, I should think."

Miss Harley looked rather annoyed, but Granville encouraged the youngster to run on, by inquiring if he knew any other people on board.

"I should think so," answered Billy. "There's Mrs. Jibboom, a widow, rather fast, I suspect, and Lady Gaskell Spanker, wife of Captain Sir Gaskell Spanker, faster still, though demure enough in the presence of her lord and master. They go on pretence of chaperoning that lot of young girls who are frisking about the decks, but they want more looking after themselves. To be sure, some of the girls are rollicking enough. There are the Miss Blueblazes, for instance, regular garrison misses—

I've a brother in the —th who knows all about them, and they did carry on in a curious way. Then there are the Miss Sinnets. You never saw anything more demure and propriety-mannered than they are on shore in company with certain personages, but just get them out of the way, and there is a change. Flirt! all's fish that comes to their net—lieutenants, masters, pursers, doctors, and midshipmen ; they seldom fly as high as commanders or captains."

"Have you ever paid them any attention, Mr. Smart ?" asked Granville, highly amused at the midshipman's impudence.

"I should think so," answered Master Billy. "At least, Miss Polly and I——"

"Come, come Master Sharp, no tales out of school, if you please," exclaimed Dick Chase, who happened to be related to the young ladies in question, and could not tell what revelations might be made by the thoughtless youngster.

"Smart is my name, sir. I beg your pardon," answered the incorrigible middy. "All was fair and aboveboard, and pretty well known, too, for I promised to splice Polly as soon as I was old enough, but Daddy Sinnett wouldn't hear of it, and I was compelled to leave poor Polly broken-hearted and forlorn till she could find a bigger midshipman to supply my place."

Miss Harley was glad that she was not among a set of people of whom such things could be said, not aware that very similar remarks were being made on board the Euphrosyne regarding some of her present companions. The two schooners had been making good way to the westward, the Eugenie still taking the lead, the Euphrosyne keeping a little on her starboard quarter, now coming up almost abeam, and then again dropping astern.

"She will be a tough one to deal with, sir," observed Dore to Dick Chase, as he watched this. "And I can't help thinking as how they means mischief when we gets out into mid-channel."

The breeze had tempted vessels which had been long at anchor to get under weigh. Some were seen standing out from Cowes Roads, others came running down the Southampton Water under all sail, and others were following the schooners from the eastward, so that the blue water in every direction was thickly dotted over with the white canvass of yachts. The royal steam yachts were cruising about, the Elfin darting like a glittering snake, though with the speed almost of an arrow, across from Portsmouth to Osborne ; the Racoon frigate was firing a salute for the arrival of some person of consequence, and two man-of-war brigs were practising their young crews in various nautical manœuvres. To

the south rose the regal towers of Osborne, among thick groves; to the west of it Cowes harbour, crowded with shipping, its club-house and imposing terrace, the wooded shores of the island extending on either side, while to the north was Calshot Castle and lordly Eaglehurst, and green trees fringing the shore to the very edge of the water. The most indifferent could not fail to admire the beauty of the scene. Miss Harley became more and more enraptured, and it was but natural that she should associate the pleasure she was receiving with Langston, who was the means of affording it.

"With this breeze we could run down to the Needles and be back before dark," observed Master Smart, who, having ascertained that no naval officer was present to wig him, stood in awe of no one on board.

"It would be very pleasant," observed one of the quiet Miss Sidmouths. "May, dear, you would like it."

Langston observed Miss Harley's quiet nod.

"Oh, charming, delightful! We have no one to wait dinner for us. Mr. Langston, you must go," cried the Miss Garry O'Ennes, in chorus.

"And we have had a taste of the good things with which you keep body and soul together on board," observed her ladyship, slyly. "We have no fear of staying out as late as you like, with such weather as this."

"I must have a smoke—won't you, Granville?" exclaimed Dick Chase, with a growling tone. "It's no use, I see. Langston will be befooled with these women."

"For my part, as I'm here, I really think it's very good fun," answered the Guardsman, as his friend dragged him forward. "It's quite refreshing. I confess I should not like an importation of London drawing-room manners. Besides, that Nora O'Enne is a magnificent young creature."

"Oh, yes! I see you both are against me," answered Dick, in the tone of a very ill-used gentleman.

Possibly May Harley's little nod decided the question, for Dore received directions to steer down the Solent Channel, instead of rounding the Leap buoy, as had been proposed.

"The wind is veering round to the westward," muttered Dick Chase, as he smoked his cigar forward, where Granville had left him. "We shall be twice as long getting down to the Needles as Langston expects, and if we don't look out we shall have those confounded women on board all night. I must frighten them, somehow, and make them get Tom to put the helm up and run home."

With this amiable resolution Chase threw the end of his cigar over-board, and went aft. He was there received with a good deal of raillery by the ladies, some complaining that he smoked, others that he went away to smoke. He, in his turn, began to talk of the uncertainty of the weather—the possibility of a storm—the danger of being out at night—of being run down by a steamer—the difficulties of the navigation.

"All imaginary, my friend," observed Billy Smart, at once divining Dick's motive. "Nothing of the sort likely to occur. There is a bright bit of moon, too, should we have to land after it's dark ; isn't there, Mr. Langston ? Mr. Chase is trying to frighten the ladies here about our long voyage, but it's no go."

Langston was too busy talking to May Harley to pay attention to the midshipman ; but Dick saw that he was completely foiled. The yachts had kept over on the north shore, that they might be well to windward for passing Hurst, so as to fetch outside the Needles. The Euphrosyne had pertinaciously kept her position on the starboard quarter of the Eugenie, which Dore was steering very close to the wind. The ladies and gentlemen on board both vessels had got into high spirits.

They had passed Lymington Creek, and were half way between it and Hurst, when Dore, who had been keeping his eye fixed on the land, suddenly put up his helm, and the next instant the Euphrosyne was seen to be hard and fast on the shore.

"I thought I'd do it," he muttered. "We'll get into better trim before we next tries it on."

"Can we render you any assistance ?" shouted Chase, as they shot away from their antagonist.

"No, no, thank you ; we shall be off in a few minutes," was the answer.

The Eugenie was soon passing the shingly beach of Hurst Castle, with its line of formidable batteries, protecting, with others on the island shore, the entrance to the Solent. The Needle Downs, and the various coloured cliffs of Alum Bay, now opened to them on the south, and the Needle rocks, with their lighthouse built on a platform cut out of the northernmost rock, while in the distance could be seen Christchurch Head and Swanage, and the now large watering-place of Bournemouth. The yacht stood on till they could see the lofty white cliffs of Scratchell's Bay on the outer side of the island.

"This is, indeed, a beautiful scene," exclaimed May Harley. "I have found no marine view equal to it."

So thought Langston at that moment.

The helm was now put up, and the schooner headed for the Hurst lighthouses. As soon as Hurst was reached, the square sail and square topsail were set, and with a strong flood she glided rapidly up the Solent. She seemed literally to fly by the ugly red but formidable forts at Freshwater and Sconce Point, and old Yarmouth Castle, while with their glasses they could see the helpless Euphrosyne still on shore, though making efforts to heave off. Before they had run quite out of sight she had succeeded in getting off, and was making sail in chase. It is extraordinary how little compassion her condition excited on board the Eugenie. Much as all the guests enjoyed the sail, they were easily persuaded to descend below to partake of a dinner Langston's steward had prepared. It need not be described. It had the effect of putting everybody into the best of humours, and even Dick Chase acknowledged that if women made themselves amusing and happy, as the Miss O'Ennes especially had done, it was pleasant for a variety to have them on board. Coffee was taken on deck, and they had gone down to tea when the Eugenie dropped her anchor off Ryde pier.

CHAPTER IV.

THE three bachelors having accompanied the ladies to the upper end of the pier, returned on board the Eugenie. Langston flattered himself that he had made way in the good graces of May Harley. That moonlight walk up the pier had produced some effect, and surely that little hand didn't usually give so firm a pressure.

He was walking the deck in solitude after his companions had turned in, enjoying the cool air and watching the silvery light of the moon as played on the surface of the calm water whenever the now uncertain breeze sent a ripple across it. Scarcely a sound was heard, except that of the tide as in circling eddies it rushed by the sides of the vessels, or when a fish rose from below, and, with a splash made by its tail, dived down again into the deep. Now and then the voice of some yachtsman was heard from the end of the pier hailing for his boat, and two or three yachts glided up to their anchorages, the noise of their chain-cables running out, of the mainsails being lowered, appearing unusually distinct. At length another vessel came gliding up from the westward, dropped her anchor close to the Eugenie—she was the Euphrosyne. Langston heard sounds of music and laughter proceeding from her as she approached. "Why, Ainslie and his friends are actually dancing, toeing and heelng it. How utterly at variance with the calm beauty

of such a night as this," he said to himself. "Dick Chase need not complain; I am thankful that we had nothing of that sort on board." After a time the boats were lowered, and the rollicking company handed into them.

"Well, at all events, though we did run on shore, we have had better fun than the slow coaches on board the Eugenie," observed one of them.

"Isn't Langston the fellow you beat at Muddleton, Ainslie?" asked another.

"Yes, and intend to beat him in more ways than one," was the answer, in a tone which showed that the speaker was somewhat elevated. "He managed to keep ahead of us this afternoon, and when we happened to get on shore was laughing at us, I doubt not, but I'll pay him off another day. I'll show him what the Euphrosyne can do."

Langton, feeling something like an eavesdropper, stepped down the companion ladder, that he might not be seen as the boats passed close to his vessel. The remarks he had heard did not leave a pleasant feeling on his mind.

Another day commenced with a perfect calm. The yachtmen appeared on deck one by one, looking around in the hopes of seeing some signs of a coming breeze. Granville stood stretching out his arms and yawning hopelessly.

"Slow work. Is this what you fellows call amusement?"

"We take the smooth and the rough together," answered Dick Chase, who was smoking a cigar. "We can go anywhere and carry our home with us. Every port is open to us free of harbour dues. The coasts of France, England, Denmark, and Norway may be visited, even though we have but a few weeks to spare, and we can take the round of the Mediterranean in the course of a summer. It is so independent too, and no little dignity is attached to the owner of a fine yacht. If Langston keeps to his resolve you'll agree with me before the summer is over, but he is terribly shaky. I am dreadfully afraid that he is captivated with that little girl who was aboard yesterday, and, if so, we shall be kept dodging about this place, and doing the very thing I was particularly anxious to avoid."

"Couldn't you manage to put a stop to it, somehow or other? He cannot be very far gone yet," suggested Granville.

"A bright idea. I'll see about it!" cried Dick. "I shall be doing him a real kindness. I consider that the greatest favour one can render a man is to prevent him entering into the bonds of matrimony."

Langston, not dreaming of the plot concocting on deck, was contentedly sitting in his luxurious cabin reading. He was a yachtsman of the best class. He had been one in his younger days before he came into his fortune, when he could only afford a small vessel; but he contrived to live on board her all the summer, and to visit a considerable portion of the coasts of England and France. He now made his yacht his home, and was no more put out because there happened to be a calm than he would have been by a rainy day, under ordinary circumstances, on shore. He was, however, quickly aroused from his studies by hearing Dick cry out that the people were collecting on the pier. The boat was ordered, and the three gentlemen were soon pacing its ample space. One of the first people Langston saw was Ainslie, among a group of ladies. They exchanged somewhat stiff salutations. Langston looked round on every side, and not seeing Miss Harley, his companions stopping to look over the papers, hurried up the pier in the hopes of meeting her. He was not disappointed. He had got nearly to the upper end when she and the Miss Sidmouths appeared. The greeting he received was satisfactory, and in high spirits he accompanied them to the end of the pier, feeling sure that they would again go on board his yacht. He was somewhat taken aback when Dick Chase came up and told him that Dore had come to say that, as it was absolutely necessary to alter the trim of the schooner, and there was every probability of the calm continuing, he advised him to commence operations forthwith. Langston felt very much annoyed, but as Dick had taken so much charge of the yacht he could scarcely complain. He had only just again begun to talk to Miss Harley, when there appeared approaching them, and walking arm and arm, her father, Sir Stephen, and Mr. Ainslie. Miss Harley changed colour as she turned round to greet her parent. Sir Stephen shook hands with Langston without the slightest stiffness.

"Trying weather for you yachtsmen. You would rather have a gale than a calm, I conclude," he remarked. Then, turning to his daughter, he continued, "My dear, I have accepted Mr. Ainslie's invitation to take a cruise on board the Euphrosyne. He can accommodate you and one of the Miss Sidmouths, should we wish to make a trip to Plymouth or Cherbourg."

If Langston felt uncomfortable before, these words made him feel still more so. Miss Harley bowed and expressed her thanks to Mr. Ainslie.

"From our experience of yesterday, we have every reason to think yachting very delightful," said Miss Sidmouth.

"Yes, our friend Langston had the start of me yesterday, and carried off these fair ladies on board the Eugenie," said Ainslie, with meaning in his tone. "But I have weathered on him this tack," he muttered to himself.

Langston heard the remark. The fates were against him just then. Ainslie did not invite him to come on board the Euphrosyne. He, however, could not tear himself away from the side of May Harley, and while they were still conversing, Lady Garry O'Enne and her daughters joined them. Her ladyship desired at once to be introduced to Sir Stephen and Mr. Ainslie. She was bent on having another sail, if not for the sake of the fresh air, for that of the champagne and other good things she hoped to find on board.

Langston was, however, determined not to invite her. That lady, however, had always known the value of having two strings to her bow; so, while she attacked Sir Stephen and Ainslie, she set her daughters to work on the feelings of Dick Chase and Granville. Dick fought bravely for a long time, foiling every assault of the syrens, but he was deserted by Granville, who was really taken with Nora, and who promised her that he would ask his friend to give them another sail if the yacht could be got ready during the afternoon. It was a sore trial to Langston to see Miss Harley and her friends going off to the Euphrosyne. He was on the way to his boat, when Lady Garry O'Enne overtook him.

"Sure, now, Mr. Langston, you are not going on, all solitary and sad, by yourself to your beautiful vessel!" she cried out. "Captain Granville has been telling my little Nora that he was sure you would be happy to have us, and I ran after you to tell you that we should be all very glad to accompany you again."

Of course Langston could only say yes, if there was a breeze, especially when he saw Granville's and pretty Nora's faces looking down on him. A breeze sprang up, but the Eugenie was not ready to weigh till after the Euphrosyne had got out of sight to the westward. The party consisted of the Garry O'Ennes, Master Billy Smart, who had been left behind by his own friends, a retired Admiral Snapper, and a Miss Susan Prattle, who knew every yacht afloat, and the affairs of everybody connected with them. The yacht stood across to Stokes Bay to look at a monster iron-clad, which was trying her speed along the measured mile, whereat Dick Chase and Admiral Snapper sighed deeply over the departed glories of the British Navy.

"For my part, sir," quoth the old sailor, "I feel a satisfaction at being laid on the shelf, when our gallant tars will have in future to fight

insides iron beehives, with guns which can carry three miles or more. There'll be nothing again like our broadside to broadside actions of old, when British pluck and good gunnery carried the day."

The party were altogether very happy. Miss O'Enne did her best to console the admiral for the changed state of things. Nora made good way with the Guardsman, Lady Garry O'Enne feasted to her heart's content, and Susan Prattle made excellent use of her tongue, and, among other things, assured Lady O'Enne that she knew it as a fact that the pretty Miss Harley, daughter of one of the members for Muddleton, was engaged to the other member.

They had crossed to Egypt Point, and scarcely had this remark been made than the Euphrosyne was seen coming from the westward. Langston ran down to meet her, and the Eugenie then hauling under her stern, the two schooners stood back together towards Ryde. The Eugenie soon passed her antagonist, and, keeping her advantage, had dropped her anchor and had most of her sails furled before the other had arrived.

CHAPTER V.

IN some years, among which that of the summer of 1865 may be reckoned, calms had for weeks together been prevalent, till the remark of "A calm morning, mate," has become as trite as that of the Scotch soldier in India to his comrade, of "Another warm day, Sandy." Such was the morning before the first day of the Cowes Regatta.

Ainslie had landed with Sir Stephen, and went up to the Sidmouths with the intention of taking them and Miss Harley off to the yacht. He felt his advantage in having her father on his side, as he thought. He wanted a wife, he admired Miss Harley, and took it for granted that she would admire him, or his fortune, or his yacht. He had been excessively annoyed at having been beaten a few days before by the Eugenie, especially as he could not well account for the circumstance. He was, however, not wholly convinced that it was owing to the superior speed of his antagonist, and he was doubly anxious to get the ladies on board again that he might have another trial with the Eugenie. On reaching the Sidmouth's house he was not a little disappointed to find that the ladies had gone by the railway to Shanklin, and would not be back till luncheon-time. Returning somewhat annoyed, he was pounced on by Lady Garry O'Enne and her four daughters, who insisted on his showing them the Euphrosyne, which they told him they had heard was

one of the most beautiful vessels between Cowes and Ryde. They had quickly ascertained Ainslie's weak point, and success was theirs. He found, however, that once on board, it was no easy matter to get them on shore again. Langston had taken a turn on the pier, and, not meeting the Sidmouths or Miss Harley, had returned on board to read and write letters. The morning had worn away, when, on going on deck, he was highly amused to see Lady Garry O'Enne and her daughters in possession of the Euphrosyne, Sir Stephen paying devoted attention to one of the latter, Granville to Nora, and Dick Chase himself to a third. So engaged were they in discussing champagne, sandwiches, and other pleasant things, that they did not even perceive him as he pulled by on his way to the shore, after having ascertained that Miss Harley was not on board. He hurried along the pier, thinking it a good opportunity to call alone on the Sidmouths. He caught sight of them as they were entering their house, having just returned from their morning excursion to Shanklin. He had no reason to complain of his reception by any of the party, especially by Miss Harley. He believed that she understood his intentions. Should he declare them at once? He asked the question of himself while he was talking to her. It would be dangerous. He would risk delay. Thick drizzling rain came on, and kept the whole party prisoners, not at all to Langston's sorrow, for Mr. Sidmouth insisted that he must not go back to his yacht in such weather.

He did his best to make himself agreeable, and succeeded in extracting a promise that the family would honour the Eugenie with their presence during one of the days of the Cowes Regatta. They could not promise to come both days, as Mr. Ainslie and Sir Stephen expected them during one of them.

As it would be necessary to leave Ryde very early in order to see the yachts start, it was arranged that the party should breakfast on board the Eugenie, and Langston undertook to meet them at seven o'clock, if that was not too early.

"O dear no—not in the least too early!" they all exclaimed.

Langston returned on board in a more contented state of mind than he had enjoyed since his defeat at Muddleton. The Garry O'Ennes still held possession of the Euphrosyne, but as he had no wish to join the rollicking party, he turned a deaf ear to Dick Chase's hail to come on board, and slipped quietly into his own cabin. Chase and Granville came on board late in the evening, laughing heartily at the magnificent generalship of Lady Garry O'Enne, though it was evident to Langston that Granville was more smitten with Nora than he wished to confess.

While, however, Langston was making arrangements for the next day, a boat came alongside with a note from Mrs. Sidmouth, saying that, as Sir Stephen wished his daughter to accompany him on board the Euphrosyne, they must defer the pleasure they had anticipated till another day.

"I will not set foot on the pier before we are off, and then I hope we may be safe from intruders," exclaimed Langston, after he had received this note.

"Ah! that is just what I advised at the first, my dear fellow," cried Dick, rubbing both his hands. "Granville will agree with me."

But Granville made no answer.

"Ah! well," continued Dick, "we shall have more time to attend to the race than had we been pestered with a tribe of women."

The 1st of August commenced with a clear sky and a fine breeze—a thorough yachting day. The Queen's Cup was to be run for by schooners belonging to the Royal Yacht Squadron. The Eugenie beat down to Cowes by early dawn, so that she could take up a good position to see the vessels start, and afterwards to follow and watch their proceedings.

To Langston the qualities of most of the racing vessels were unknown, but Dick Chase was well up in all yachting information; Granville knew nothing about the matter. The racing yachts, all schooners, had taken up a line from the Castle towards Eaglehurst, though it ought to have been more towards the Brambles. The outermost was the Egeria, lately built by Wanhill, of Poole, well-known as the builder of fast craft; next to her was the Titania, a vessel of known speed; and in succession the Pantomime, supposed to be very fast; the Viking, with her rover's flag; the Albertine, a favourite with many; the Galatea, the Aline, the largest schooner of the fleet and one of the fastest; and the little Aquiline, of little more than a quartar of her size. There was a north-westerly breeze, the tide making strong to the eastward. Yachts large and small, schooners, cutters, and yawls, with their ensigns flying, were cruising about in all directions. As the moment for starting approached, all were on the tiptoe of expectation. The Egeria had to move her position, as she was too much to the westward, though her owner might have considered he could afford to be a little in the rear.

At fifty-five minutes past nine the preparatory gun was fired. Not only the owners, but every man on board the racing yachts, entered into the excitement of the work. The gun for starting sent a thrill through every heart. Round came the graceful fabrics, the Egeria

taking the lead, and next the Titania, followed closely by the Pantomime, and of the other vessels it would have been difficult to decide which was the headmost. Away before a spanking breeze the yachts flew swiftly on, the Egeria still leading, and the Pantomime having passed the Titania next. Rounding the Nab, they had now to haul their wind and beat back, when the Aline in fine style overhauled the vessels ahead of her and took the lead. The racing yachts were now scattered in every direction across the Channel, each sailing master believing that the course he was taking was likely to lead him soonest to the winning mark. While in beating back some kept on the north shore, the Aline nearly a mile ahead of the rest, and followed by Pantomime, Albertine, and Viking, with the little Aquiline far astern, stood right across the Channel towards Ryde pier. After this the Egeria, which had been beating up through Stokes Bay, stood across, and weathered the Pantomime, which had been caught up by the Albertine, which vessel also she before long overhauled, taking her position next to the Aline. They had now to beat down to Yarmouth, the mark vessel off which place was rounded by the Aline, Egeria, Albertine, and Viking in succession, and now once more they were to run before the wind, but there was no change of place and little variation in speed, except that the Egeria gained a few seconds on the Aline. Never was there a more beautiful contested race than between these two vessels, and when they passed the vessel off Cowes the Aline was but six seconds ahead of her competitor. As it was a time race, the Aline being the largest vessel, the prize went to the Egeria, to the satisfaction of her builder, and greatly to that of her owner, Mr. Mulholland, an Irish gentleman.

"Hurrah!" shouted Lady Garry O'Enne, when she heard the result on board the Euphrosyne. "Old Ireland for ever. Erin-go-Bragh! I'll not despair of my country, nor be ashamed of her either, when one of her sons can carry off the silver cup given by her own most gracious Majesty herself."

To do her ladyship justice, no one on board the Euphrosyne had been a more interesting spectator of the contest from the moment she heard that a countryman was one of the competitors. The whole party, indeed, were supremely happy, except, perhaps, the fair Nora, who would rather have had Captain Granville with her, and it is possible that Miss Harley would have preferred being on board the Eugenie, though she did her best to be agreeable to all her companions, so that no one would have suspected her predilection for the other vessel, if it existed. Twice during the day the Eugenie had passed so close to the Euphrosyne, that those on board could clearly distinguish each other's features.

May Harley saw perhaps with some satisfaction that there were no ladies on board the other vessel. Langston bowed, and as he did so his eyes were especially turned towards her, as she stood against the bulwarks, where none of her companions could observe her countenance. Granville bowed, and did not mind looking unutterable things at Nora, who very clearly perceived them, and did her best to make the gallant captain understand that she did so. As the vessels were on different tacks, they very quickly shot past each other. Langston did not like the idea of following the Euphrosyne as she had followed his vessel. He was beginning to feel a positive dislike to her owner, and though not in the least of a quarrelsome disposition, there was no man with whom at that moment he would more readily have fallen out. Dick Chase, meantime congratulated himself that he had succeeded in his purpose, and that they would no longer, as he expressed it, "be bothered by having petticoats on board."

"A happy clearance, Granville, depend on it, when we got rid of the last of them," he observed. "We must now persuade Tom to up stick and go foreign at once, or he'll be getting into another mess directly."

"I should think that he would wish to give the Garry O'Ennes another cruise first," said the captain with something nearer approaching a blush on his cheeks than had ever risen there since his boyhood. "I have an idea, too, that these Sidmouths expect him to be at their service occasionally."

"I know they do, but for his sake and your sake, the sooner we are clear of them the better. In my opinion, when a fellow marries he is good for nothing, and that is what both of you are thinking of doing," said Dick.

Of course the captain protested that he had no intention of the sort, but acknowledged that he thought Langston had. Dick looked the Guardsman full in the face as he said,

"I'll tell you what, though, it doesn't do to play fast and loose with these Irish girls. In my younger days, a military friend of mine—like yourself, for instance—who was fond of making love to the prettiest girl in each place where he was quartered, and always discovering some reason when the route came of breaking off the connection, found himself at length stationed in a town in the south of Ireland. It wasn't long before he fell in with a girl on whom to exercise his fond affections, as he called it, and a very pretty girl she was. One day he went so far as to propose, and was accepted. At length he was ordered off, and so he told her that he dared not marry without his father's permission, and

that he had written to him to obtain it, though he very much feared it might not be given. As it happened, the young lady's grandfather, who was a noted duellist, had heard of the young officer's mode of proceeding. He accordingly called at his quarters, and desired a private interview. 'You have been making love to my little granddaughter, I understand,' he began, with his lips set, and his large grey eye fixed firmly on the young man, 'and you have proposed to her, and she has accepted you, and you intend to marry her.' 'Yes, sir, certainly. I admire her exceedingly, and I have written to beg my father to allow me to marry her.' 'Ah! very well. But look you here, my friend,' said the old gentleman, between his teeth; 'your father's permission is a very good thing, and I would advise you to obtain it by all manner of means; but you will marry my grandchild whether you get it or not.'

"No man should compel me to marry a girl, however much I might have been making love to her," answered the captain, not liking the story.

"Perhaps not, said Dick, quietly. "But something else would, I hope; your sense of honour, your right feelings."

Granville stared at his companion, but said nothing. He had evidently not comprehended Dick's character. For some time afterwards Granville was lost in thought, while Chase sat whistling,

"I care for nobody, no not I, if nobody cares for me;"
changing it to—

"Begone dull care, I prithee begone from me;
Begone dull care, you and I shall never agree."

Langston had been carefully watching the proceedings of the Euphrosyne at a distance, and managed to drop his anchor a short time before she did, and, moreover, to be on the pier to receive the Sidmouths as they stepped out of the boat.

"I must positively engage you and your friends to honour the Eugenie on Thursday. The best race of the regatta takes place round the island, and we will accompany the racing vessels."

Mrs. Sidmouth was appealed to, and her consent obtained.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER dressing in his most elaborate style, Ainslie, going on deck, turned his glass towards the pier, observing to Sir Stephen :

"They ought to be down by this time, for if we are not away we shall see nothing of the race."

"Did you tell them the hour ?" asked the baronet.

"No ; I thought that you were to make all arrangements, Sir Stephen," said Ainslie.

"Certainly not ; it was you who were to arrange the matter," replied his friend. "You particularly desired to do so, for the sake of seeing the ladies."

Ainslie felt not a little confused. He remembered having with his guests floored a good many bottles of champagne and claret the day before, and that he had gone on shore with the intention of calling on the Sidmouths, but that somehow or other he had got on board again without seeing them. He must make amends by hurrying up to their house, to bring them on board to breakfast. Jumping into his boat, he pulled to the pier, and ran up it faster than he had moved by means of his legs for many a day. To reach the top of Ryde pier in a hurry on a bright summer morning is not to be accomplished by well-fed gentlemen without the sensation of heat. Ainslie stopped to fan his reddened forehead, and then rushed to the door. The windows were all open, but no sound came forth through them. He nervously rang the bell.

"They all went off between six and seven this morning, sir, to go on board a yacht," was the unsatisfactory reply he got from the housemaid, who opened the door.

"Done again ! Some of that fellow Langston's work," he exclaimed. "I'll be even with him yet."

On returning on board, he ordered the yacht to be got under weigh for Cowes, where she arrived in time to see the racing vessels in a confused mass three or four miles away to the westward.

At an hour when young ladies during the season in London are scarcely in their first sleep, the Sidmouths, with May Harley and the Garry O'Ennes, were gaily tripping it down Ryde pier. The Eugenie's boats were waiting, and they were on board, and the schooner far on her way towards Cowes, before the inhabitants of the Euphrosyne's cabins had put their heads above the companion hatch. At length

when they did so, they were somewhat surprised not to see the Eugenie.

It would be difficult to picture a more beautiful sight to a yachtsman's eye than Cowes Roads presented on the morning of the third of August, as the vessels about to contend for the handicap prize of a hundred guineas, in a course round the island, took up their stations off the Castle. There were numerous schooners, from the powerful Aline to the pretty little Aquiline, and there was the Witchcraft, a vessel which a seaman would choose without hesitation as fitted to buffet the stormiest waves of the Atlantic, or to chase a slaver or pirate, or for any other work where speed or endurance is required. There was the Albertine, which had put forth good speed in the previous race, and the beautiful little Niobe, and the Marina and Sibyl and Christabel cutters, and the Egeria, the winner of the Queen's Cup, and the Pantomime, Creusa, Viking, Galatea, Titania, and Zoe schooners, the fine sea-going-looking yawl Speranza, and last not least, the veteran Arrow, built by the late Mr. Weld, and which for a generation has carried off the palm as the fastest cutter afloat, to be beaten only by the Lulworth and Alarm, also built by Mr. Weld, and now rigged as schooners.

There was a strong north-west wind and a weather tide. No circumstances could be more propitious. It was just the weather a yachtsman loves for an honest race, everything depending on speed and seamankind sailing. Flags were flying from the Castle, and from numerous flagstaffs on shore; vessels in the harbour and roads were gaily dressed; the esplanade, the quays, and every available point was crowded with spectators, and hundreds of vessels of all sizes were cruising about in all directions.

Langston and his guests on board the Eugenie took a warm interest in the race. Each chose a separate vessel Miss Harley selected the Niobe, and Langston the Speranza, on account of her name.

"As long as she does not give up, I shall be content," he observed, as he told her of his choice.

Of course Lady Garry O'Enne chose the Egeria, Nora took the Arrow, and Granville told her that he had fixed on the Witchcraft, as he had never in his life felt himself so completely bewitched. The other yachts were quickly chosen, on account of their pretty names and their own beauty.

At forty-five minutes past nine a.m. the preparatory gun was fired, and the Eugenie, hauling her tacks aboard, stood towards the Needles,

that she might keep well ahead of the racing vessels. Five minutes passed, and at the sound of a second gun, away started the racers, all speedily covered with clouds of snow-white canvass, the graceful Albertine being the first away, the beautiful Niobe the second, to Miss Harley's delight, followed by the Christabel, Viking, Speranza, and Egeria.

The Aline and Witchcraft were slower in getting away, but soon came gliding up in the wake of their competitors, while the Arrow, in beautiful style, weathered in succession the craft which had been placed to windward of her in the line. Scarcely as much attention was paid to the beauty of the island shores as would have been bestowed under other circumstances by the party on board the Eugenie. She had got outside the Needles, and was easing off her sheets, and setting her square sails and topsails, when the racing yachts appeared round the rocks.

"I shall put my trust on the craft which first appears," said Langston to Miss Harley, with an anxiety to which he would scarcely have acknowledged. "The Speranza!" he cried, as that vessel came round the Needles.

"I had expected to see the Niobe," said Miss Harley. "And yet I confess that I should prefer smiling hope to the tearful lady."

"See, next comes the goddess beloved of Numa," said Langston.

"In other words, a wise little woman who gave him good counsel, and like other wise women, kept herself in the background," cried Dick Chase, who had heard the remark. "Come, come, Tom, you are getting too classical for a yachtsman. Here's the Christabel, now the Arrow. Hurrah for the Witchcraft. Next comes your Niobe, Miss Harley, followed by the Queen of the Fairies; that's only Shakespearean. Then see the jolly Viking, scarce ten minutes difference between the first and the last. The Albertine follows, and the Creusa, Marina, and Pantomime close together, with the little Sibyl astern."

It was indeed a beautiful sight as the crowd of vessels dotting the blue sea under the lofty white Needle cliffs set every inch of canvas they could carry before the wind, and glided on at headlong speed towards St. Catharine's. The Arrow soon took the lead, the Witchcraft overtaking all others before her, as did the little Niobe, all except those two. Off Ventnor it became necessary to haul their wind to stand across Sandown Bay for the Nab, when once more the square sails were handed, and a dead beat began for Cowes, which would have been an advantage to the cutter in the old days of square topsail schooners. The Niobe was the only cutter which profited by it, and she held her own through the

whole of that well-contested race. It was not till now that the racing vessels passed the Eugenie, and she was near enough to Cowes to see the Arrow come in first, the Witchcraft second, and the Niobe third, she having gone round the island in seven hours and eighteen minutes. As the Arrow had to allow the Witchcraft seventeen minutes, that vessel had to allow the Niobe twenty-three minutes, and the Arrow had to allow her forty, the Niobe was declared, with great justice, the winner.

The whole party were highly pleased with the cruise. It would have been difficult to have taken a more interesting one, combining the excitement of the race, the beauty of the coast scenery, the picturesqueness of the Undercliffe, the grandeur of the Culvers, and the adjacent heights crowned with batteries, and the pure fresh sea breeze.

Granville, carried away by the circumstances so novel and so pleasant, asked the fair Nora if she could make up her mind to marry an officer in a marching regiment, as he should be obliged to exchange into one.

"If it's yourself you mean, Captain Granville," she answered, looking up in his face, "I wouldn't ask what you are, provided you are an honest, brave man, and that my heart tells me you must be."

CHAPTER VII.

GRANVILLE walked home with Nora. He had been somewhat precipitate, he confessed to himself, but still he was not sorry. With her winning Irish ways, and unsophisticated notions, and her good sense, and right impulses, she would make him, he was sure, a very first-rate wife, and as he had no one's leave to ask, it seemed pretty certain that Nora would ere long become Mrs. Granville.

Langston had also walked home with May Harley. He had not proposed, for, though he felt pretty sure that he should be accepted, he had an idea that it was the proper thing to wait till the young lady had been longer acquainted with him.

May wished that he had spoken. She was sure that he intended doing so, and she was equally sure that she should accept him.

As the Eugenie had come to an anchor before the Euphrosyne, she had not seen her father, but she believed that he would come on shore the next day, if not to see her, to call on the Garry O'Ennes, as she had the rather unpleasant suspicion that he was

deeply smitten with Kathleen, as elderly gentlemen occasionally are with young girls.

The next morning he appeared at even an earlier hour than she had expected.

It was evident that he had something of importance to communicate, and after he had paid his respects with due formality to the Sidmouths, he desired to see his daughter alone in the dining-room.

" You have ever been a good daughter to me, May, and since your mother, Lady Harley, was taken from me, I have had little reason to feel her loss," he began, as soon as they were seated.

" There, he is going to tell me that he intends to propose to Kathleen," thought his daughter; but the baronet continued:

" Necessary as you are to my happiness, yet, to secure yours, I am ready to sacrifice my own feelings to your advantage," he continued.

" What can he mean ? " thought May, sorely puzzled.

" You must have been prepared for what I am about to say, my child," he went on. " A gentleman of fortune—a very large fortune—has proposed for you, and I have assured him that you are heart free and disengaged, and that I knew you would be guided by my wishes. I speak of Mr. Ainslie, and I have especially to beg that you will accept him as your future husband. He is most liberal in his intentions, and will make a very handsome settlement, which I am sure that you are too sensible a girl to despise. I am under great obligations to Mr. Ainslie, and I am equally sure that, disengaged as you are, you are too dutiful a daughter not to accept his most flattering proposals."

The baronet paused and looked at his daughter, expecting to hear her express her satisfaction and willingness to comply with his wishes. He was considerably taken aback when he saw her turn deadly pale, and heard her gasp out :

" My dear father, I cannot—indeed I cannot ! "

" What ! " he exclaimed. " Not become the mistress of Ainslie Park —of his superb mansion in Belgrave-square—of that beautiful yacht ? What nonsense are you talking, girl ! I tell you, I am deeply indebted to Mr. Ainslie—I am pledged to him ; in fact, I must insist on your complying with my wishes. Tell me, have you, without my sanction and knowledge, engaged yourself to any one else ? "

May scarcely trusted herself to speak. At length she murmured out :

" No, father, I have not, but I feel sure that I cannot love Mr. Ainslie, and I thought that at the present time no father in England

would ever propose to his daughter to bestow her hand on a person to whom she could not give her affection."

Sir Stephen got up and walked about the room, muttering :

"The present century is like the last and all former centuries, I should think. Children must obey their parents, and, if fathers get into difficulties, they have a right to expect that their daughters will help them out of them. I will be explicit, that you may understand me. Mr. Ainslie will pay his formal addresses to you with my full approbation, and I must prohibit you from going on board Mr. Langston's yacht, or receiving his addresses, or those of any other gentleman. Good morning. You will think over this matter, and prepare to accompany me in a few days, when we shall sail from this to the westward, or perhaps to the coast of France."

Poor May could no longer restrain her tears, but when her father, with the debonair air of a youthful lover, walked out of the room, she sobbed bitterly :

"Why did not Mr. Langston propose openly to me yesterday, and then I might boldly have said that I was engaged, and that the thing was impossible ?"

Now it happened that Nora O'Enne had formed a romantic attachment to her, and that very morning called to be the first to tell her of her engagement to Captain Granville. Her eyes were still red with weeping, and of course Nora insisted on knowing the cause of her sorrow. May was not unwilling to tell her, for she had discovered her sincere honest character, and knew that, though she might have their sympathy, she was not likely to obtain much advice or assistance from the Sidmouths.

"Then if you are obliged to go on board the yacht, I'll go with you, and see if my woman's wits cannot foil Mr. Ainslie's audacious proceedings," exclaimed Nora, taking May's hand. "I'll explain all to Captain Granville, and he must let me go, and, if he grumbles, I must teach him better manners by going without his leave."

"But you might offend Captain Granville, and risk your own happiness," urged May.

"Oh ! not at all," cried Nora, in an animated tone. "If he is the man I believe him, he'll only admire me the more for the interest I take in a friend's welfare."

So it was settled, Nora declaring that she could manage the whole matter.

May Harley had expected to enjoy her visit to Ryde, but, instead, she found herself beset with perplexities and difficulties. Langston called

frequently, but, though she treated him as before, she was compelled to decline every invitation to go on board his yacht. Her friends, who had no great fancy for sailing, and had before gone very much for her sake, would not go without her, so that he became more and more puzzled and disappointed.

On the week following the Cowes Regatta the numerous sailing-matches of the Ryde Regatta began. The first days, though soft zephyrs played over the surface or the deep, were too calm to try the sailing qualities of the yachts, while others were rainy, misty, or blowing hard.

The Ryde Club, though not established till after several others were in existence, takes rank next to that of the Cowes Yacht Squadron, numbers upwards of four hundred members, and possesses some of the finest and fastest yachts afloat. In its early days, Mr. Ackers, who then owned the superb three-masted square-topsail schooner *Brilliant*, was commodore, and Thomas Willis Fleming, the principal founder of the club, vice-commodore. Captain Thellusson was the next commodore, and Lord Burghley vice. Mr. Ackers then built another *Brilliant*, but the first *Brilliant* passed into merchants' hands to undertake some work where speed was required, and his present yacht is a superb screw steamer, in which he has lately made a voyage to the Mediterranean.

A great change has taken place in the rig of yachts. Formerly a large cutter was looked upon as the craft most to be desired. Now all the large vessels are schooners ; and even the *Alarm*, the largest cutter yacht, has been rigged as one, after having been sailed for some time by Mr. Weld as a yawl. The old *Arrow* is now one of the largest cutters. The schooners, however, no longer, as formerly, carry square topsails, which prevented their sailing close to the wind, but, instead, have a large foresail and mainsail very square in the head. The appearance of the *America* brought about a great change in the cut of yachts' sails. They are now, in imitation of hers, made to stand as flat as boards ; the mainsail is often laced to the boom ; there is a boom to the foresail, and even the foot of the forestaysail is laced to a spar. The *America*, after giving such valuable instruction to yacht sailors, for which they ought to be duly grateful, returned to her native shores in the character of a blockade runner, where some well-directed shots sent her to the bottom. She deserved a better fate.

Tom Langston took far less interest than he had expected in the races of the Ryde Regatta. May Harley could not come on board. He scarcely ever saw her on the pier, and sometimes, even when the Sid-

mouths were there, she remained at home. Had he known the true cause of this he might not have been so dispirited. She found that, whenever she came on the pier, she was subjected to Mr. Ainslie's marked attentions, whereas he did not often come up to the Sidmouths, and when he did, through the aid of her friends, she was generally able to avoid him.

The Garry O'Ennes were, however, very constantly on board the Eugenie. Langston told Granville to ask them whenever he liked, and her ladyship was not slow of availing herself of his invitations. Kathleen, who had hopes of becoming Lady Harley, would rather have gone on board the Euphrosyne, but she consoled herself by meeting the baronet constantly on the pier, and occasionally Ainslie was successful in carrying the whole party on board his yacht.

Of course, Dick Chase was more than ever in despair. "Here have we been spending a large number of the precious days of summer in doing the very things we had all agreed not to do," he muttered to himself, for the fiftieth time, as from his perch forward, cigar in mouth, he watched the party amusing themselves aft. "Langston fallen in love with a very nice girl, I'll allow, but it's a chance if he gets her after all; and Granville, who I thought was safe from that sort of thing, hooked as securely as a trout in the hands of an expert fisherman. Whether he finds love in a marching regiment, with a blooming wife and a small tribe of fledglings, will make amends for the life he has led in the Guards, his club, and London society, I rather doubt. However, each man to his taste. I only wish that they had waited till the summer was over to get into this mess." Dick was considerably comforted, soon after this, by a proposal which sprang from Langston to get the yacht provisioned for sea and to start immediately, either across or down Channel.

CHAPTER VIII.

LANGSTON and Dick Chase were sitting one evening after dinner in solitary grandeur in the cabin of the Eugenie, when Granville returned on board. He threw himself on a sofa, with his hat beside him and his legs stretched out. His countenance showed that he had something to communicate.

"What is it?" asked Chase.

"Thus much. You fellows are fond of saying that when a fellow is

engaged he is worth next to nothing, and when he is married that he is worth nothing at all. I want to prove that he can be worth something to you, Tom, at all events. Nora has told me all about it, and in a way that shows me she is an honest, true-hearted woman. It appears that Sir Stephen has insisted on his daughter taking a cruise with him in the *Euphrosyne*, and as the Sidmouths would not go, Nora arranged to get her mother and Kathleen to accompany her, that she might defend Miss Harley from the attentions of that fellow Ainslie." Langston felt his heart lighter on hearing this. "They sail to the westward to-morrow morning, and, perhaps, over to Cherbourg to witness the meetings of the fleets, and the consequent fêtes and amenities which are to be exchanged. Nora believes that Sir Stephen wishes to make Kathleen Lady Harley, and to that I can have no objection, though I flatter myself that her sister will have the best husband of the two, and she is certain that he also intends his daughter, for private reasons of his own, to become Mrs. Ainslie, and to that you, Langston, will, I opine, have a very considerable objection."

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Langston, starting up. "The fellow shall not have her, if I can prevent it."

"You might have prevented any chance of it by proposing to her, as I did a week ago to Nora, and I am very certain that you would have been accepted, at least Nora tells me so, and, depend on it, she is good authority," said Granville.

"What is to be done? Can you advise, my dear fellow?" exclaimed Langston, "What a fool I was!"

"Be wise. Cut the matter, and consider yourself well out of it!" cried Dick Chase.

"Hold your tongue, Dick," said Granville. "Listen, my dear Langston. Follow the course I advise—rather, it was Nora advised it—and you will be safe. Write an offer—let it be brief and clear—I will take it on shore. Nora is with her, and will deliver it. I will bring the answer back."

Langston, like a wise man, sat down and did as he was advised. Never was a love-letter written, sealed, and directed in so short a time. Granville jumped into the gig, and ran with it up the pier faster than any of his brother Guardsmen would have believed possible. Meantime, Dick tried to keep Langston amused; talked of the Atlantic Telegraph, the accident which had occurred to it, of what had become of the Great Eastern, of the proposed meeting of the iron-clads at Cherbourg, of the state of America, condition of the negroes, the war in New Zealand, of murders and executions, of yacht races past, present,

and future, till Granville jumped on board again with Miss Harley's reply.

Langston read the note over two or three times without speaking, and then, mechanically it seemed to his friend, locked it up in his writing-desk.

" Well, old fellow, what does she say ? " asked Dick, at length.

" Never mind—she'll not marry anybody else as long as I am constant, and with that promise I ought to be content, so we'll up anchor to-morrow morning and follow the Euphrosyne to Cherbourg.

Langston was on deck at dawn, for sleep he could not. There was but little wind, but the brilliant and variegated tints of the fleecy clouds which covered the sky just before the sun arose, gave the promise of a strong breeze, if not of a gale. He dressed rapidly to be ready for emergencies, and kept his glass employed in watching the whole length of the pier, at the end of which the Euphrosyne's boats were in waiting. Dore had received directions to heave the anchor short, and to be ready for making sail ; the gig also was ordered, that Granville might escort Nora on board the Euphrosyne. At an earlier hour than he had expected the whole party appeared, escorted by Master Billy Smart. As no one had come up on deck on board the yacht, the baronet and Ainslie were probably caught napping. At all events, they had not shown before the Euphrosyne was got under weigh, and with the wind from the southward, was standing towards Cowes. The Eugenie at the same moment tripped her anchor, and her owner had the satisfaction of seeing May Harley earnestly watching her as she followed leisurely in the other's wake.

" What do you think of the weather, Dore ? " asked Langston of the master.

" Why, sir, I don't like the looks of it at all ; but when we gets outside the Needles we shall know more about it," was the answer.

The yachts had started, so as to carry the whole of the ebb to the westward, and they thus rapidly glided by Cowes, already gay and bustling, and secluded Newtown, and the picturesque little town of Yarmouth, towards the tall red lighthouses of Hurst. As they passed through the Needle passage Langston became more than ever convinced that a heavy gale was brewing ; but as the Euphrosyne stood on, so of course did he. The Eugenie being the fastest vessel, he could hold any position he wished, and he had therefore determined to keep about an eighth of a mile astern of the other during the day, and near enough at night to watch every movement.

The Needles were left behind, Christchurch Head and its old church

tower were seen on the starboard beam, with Studland Bay and the cliffs above Swanage beyond, and in the far distance the Bill of Portland stretching out into the sea. Heavy seas now came rolling in from the south-west, and dark clouds chased each other across the sky. Langston's object was to keep the Euphrosyne well in sight, but not so close as to allow Ainslie any just cause of complaint. He explained his object to Dore who, of course, entered fully into it.

"Trust me, sir, blow high or blow low, light or dark, I'll not lose sight of the craft," he answered. Still the Euphrosyne stood to the westward. "Maybe he wishes to get well to windward, so as to stretch across on one tack, or maybe he isn't going to cross at all," observed Dore.

"At all events, keep a watchful eye on her," said Langston. "Should the weather become thick, as it promises to do, we must get closer to her. I would not miss her for a thousand pounds."

Granville was as eager as Langston to keep near the Euphrosyne. Dick Chase was the only one of the party who seemed to be indifferent to what might occur, and perhaps he was more interested than he appeared to be.

"It's blowing precious hard for those poor women on board the schooner ahead," he observed to Dore. "It's all very well for men to be knocking about in weather like this, but I cannot bear to see women exposed to it."

"Nor I neither, sir," answered Dore. "If I had them on hoard I'd run into Portland. It's not likely the gale will last long, and if they hold on for Cherbourg they'll not be in a fit state to enjoy any of the goings on there."

Langston's state of mind may be better supposed than described, as the wind blew stronger and stronger, the seas became more heavy, and the spray came flying over the deck of the schooner. Ainslie was nothing of a sailor, and it seemed doubtful how far his master might be considered a good one, or if a good one, how far the wine and spirits, with which the yacht was over-liberally supplied, might have interfered with his judgment. What could the two lovers do, but picture to themselves the sufferings of the ladies on board the Euphrosyne. Had they been with them the case would have been bad enough, but they would, at least, have been able to support and encourage them.

Off Swanage the Euphrosyne tacked, and it was now to be seen whether Ainslie intended to stand across the channel or not. Sail had been very much reduced on board both schooners. The Euphrosyne stood

on far enough to the southward to weather St. Alban's Head. There was a heavy sea on the Race.

"Even if he intends putting into Portland, he will do well to stand on for some time longer to go outside the Race," observed Chase to Dore.

"I hope he may, sir; for even in such a craft as this it's no pleasant thing going through it, though it's not so bad as Portland. I've known a cutter of sixty tons and more, attempting to run through that Race, go down like a shot—a sea just leaps up above a vessel's deck and comes down and fills her at once; and though that's not likely to happen in a big craft, there's a danger of people being washed off the deck before they know what is happening."

These remarks were not especially consolatory to Langston and Granville, who overhead them, especially when directly afterwards they saw the leading schooner go about and stand directly for the Race.

The Eugenie, after standing on some way farther, went about also, and as she did so Langston ordered the skylights and hatches to be secured. He had no reason to fear that the Euphrosyne would not go through it, but he dreaded the alarm which May and her companions would suffer should any accident occur. Being well to windward, however, he would be able to bear down to their assistance. Anxiously the progress of the leading yacht was watched. She was soon within the influence of the Race. Headlong she seemed to plunge into the seas; now she rose again; round her on every side they danced and foamed. Granville looked on with a feeling akin to horror, believing that a spar or rope carried away might prove the destruction of all on board.

"Can we do nothing for them, my dear fellow?" he asked of Langston.

"We are overhauling her fast, but I trust that no accident will occur to make them require our assistance," was the answer; but Granville was far from satisfied, for as the yacht pitched and tumbled about, he could not conceive how human beings could exist on board, not aware all the time that the Eugenie was performing a succession of almost as eccentric movements. She, too, was soon in the Race, but though a few seas came jumping on board, wetting everybody on deck, she was soon through it, closely following the Euphrosyne into Portland Harbour, to which it was now evident she was bound. In rather more than an hour both yachts were snugly lying in smooth water, within the protection of that magnificent construction of stone, which had been run out from

Portland to form the finest harbour of refuge on the coast of England. Granville begged at once to go on board the Euphrosyne to inquire after the ladies, a satisfaction which, under the circumstances of the case, Langston could not afford himself. Away went Granville. As he approached the yacht his heart was full of forebodings, as he expected to find that the ladies, overcome with terror and sickness, would be unable to see him. No one was on deck, but he was invited below, when, as he stepped into the cabin, he was greeted with a merry laugh by Nora, who exclaimed,

"Oh, Captain Granville, we are so glad you are come; we have had such fun, such tumbling and tossing about, but we didn't mind it, and came down below and held on to the sofas and chairs, and Mr. Smart was very attentive, and brought us everything we wanted. Poor mamma was rather uncomfortable, but we consoled her, and laughed at her, and gave her champagne and brandy till she was well, and Miss Harley, and Kathleen, and I, were as merry as possible all the time. But though we ladies were all well, the same cannot be said of the gentlemen," and she gave an arch look. "Sir Stephen was soon knocked up, and Mr. Ainslie was knocked down, or somehow or other tumbled down, and they are both fast asleep in their cabins. We should not be sorry if the latter remained there till the end of the trip."

Granville confessed that he had thrown away a great deal of sympathy and anxiety, and suggested that it would be kind to send the gig back to assure Langston that all the party were well. Miss Harley thanked him with a look, but said nothing. Perhaps she knew that Langston would require no assurance that her feelings towards him were unchanged. Master Smart proposed that as he had been appointed Mr. Ainslie's lieutenant, he should forthwith order dinner, and wake up the sleepers to come and eat it. Granville on this took his departure, very much relieved in mind, but not the less in love with the high-spirited Nora. At all events, it was satisfactory to Langston to learn that the ladies were in good health and spirits. As far as they knew, as soon as the weather moderated they were to run across to Cherbourg. It was, however, just possible that Sir Stephen, having had enough of yachting during the last few hours, might wish to return to the calmer waters of the Solent.

CHAPTER IX.

In the evening the wind fell, and Langston kept a sharp look-out on the movements of the Euphrosyne, that he might be ready to start as soon as she did. He thought it very likely that if Ainslie was determined to go to Cherbourg, she might be got under weigh during the night, as with the advantage of an ebb tide she would be able to stand right across on one tack. Though he put great confidence in Dore, he was himself constantly on deck during the night. Four bells in the morning watch had just struck on board the ships in the harbour, when, as he was taking a look round, the sound of an anchor being got up and a mainsail hoisted reached his ears. He jumped into the dingy, and pulling up to where the Euphrosyne lay, he soon assured himself that she was preparing to sail. Hurrying back, he roused his crew, and as she glided out from among the shipping, which had brought up for shelter during the previous day, he made sail, and followed close at her heels in chase. Ainslie had evidently wished to get away without his knowledge—it was a satisfaction to have foiled him. On looking, however, at his barometer, he was annoyed to find that so far from having risen it had fallen considerably.

"Could Ainslie have known this?" he said to Granville, pointing it out.

"No, he never thought of looking, or possibly does not know its use, even if he has one on board."

When the yachts were clear of Portland Bill, the wind was found to be from the westward, but the Euphrosyne, instead of steering for Cherbourg, shaped a course it appeared for Guernsey. It was difficult to say why this was done, except that Ainslie had found his cellar getting low, and wished to replenish it from the stores existing in that fair island. The Eugenie followed closely. Whether or not those on board the Euphrosyne observed her it was difficult to say, as no sign of recognition was made. Thus the two yachts ran on. There was soon evidence that the barometer had not given a false warning, for as the morning drew on the wind increased, and by the time the sun was up it was blowing as hard as it had done the day before. This time, knowing what good sailors the ladies were, perhaps the two lovers were not quite so anxious about them as before, yet, as the wind blew harder and harder, and a thick driving mist frequently concealed their vessel from view, they wished that the Euphrosyne had remained quietly at anchor in Portland Harbour. Langston began to fear, also, that he might lose

sight of her, as it required even more than his former vigilance to avoid doing so. Still as she could run for Guernsey or Cherbourg should the gale increase, there was no very great cause for anxiety. She was also kept under snug canvas, and making tolerably fair weather of it. Some hours had thus passed away ; the weather became thicker occasionally than ever, but there was no more wind, and it seemed evident that she was steering for Guernsey, with the intention of keeping to the westward and south of it, and hauling round to St. Peter's. Night had come on, and the Caskets Lights had been made, so that Langston knew exactly his position, when Dore and others on the look-out with him declared that they could not see the Euphrosyne. A thick mist had suddenly come between the two vessels. Langston hoped that it would speedily pass off, and reveal her again to his sight. When, however, it grew lighter she was not to be seen. One of the men declared that he had just before made out a sail on the port-bow standing to the eastward. A council of war was held, and it was agreed that Ainslie had after all determined to run for Cherbourg.

The schooner's head was therefore turned to eastward, the foresail loosed, and a square topsail set, which sent her flying through the water at a rate which would enable her very soon to make up for the ground she had lost. At this time the position of the schooner was supposed to be a little to the west-north-west of the Caskets, which dangerous rocks were consequently on her starboard bow. Again the wind had moderated, but it was thicker than ever, so that nothing could be seen a hundred fathoms ahead. This was very trying, as there was consequently a great risk of missing the Euphrosyne. Still there was no help for it, as the only possible chance of coming up with her, supposing she was bound for Cherbourg, was continuing the course they were then steering. Ainslie was not fond generally of carrying much sail, and it was not likely that he would do so on this occasion. Langston, therefore, again shortened sail, to avoid the risk of passing him, as soon as he calculated that he had made up for his lost ground. The three Caskets Lights were passed on the starboard beam considerably closer than he had expected, and some dreadful fears forced themselves on him that the Euphrosyne had gone still nearer, and might even now be lying shattered into fragments among those dreadful rocks. But like a wise man he banished such thoughts as soon as they were formed.

Beyond lay Alderney, the northern coast of which is of a character which no seaman would willingly approach on a dark blowing night. Langston had, however, a strong desire to pass as near to it as possible, and having taken exactly the bearings of the Caskets Lights, he could

do so without undue danger. Under these circumstances it was more than ever satisfactory to find that the wind continued to drop and the sea to lessen, though it was darker than ever. Towards the end of the middle watch they were off the coast of Alderney. All hands were on deck, looking out for the chase; Langston and Granville of course were, and Dick Chase remained to keep them company.

"I heard a gun," exclaimed Langston. "Yes, there is another. Good Heavens! a vessel on shore. Can she be the *Euphrosyne*?"

No one could say that this was impossible, though Dick Chase and Dore did their best to persuade Langston and Granville that it was not likely. To approach the spot in the dark was to run a great risk of sharing the same fate, yet too probably, unless they could at once render assistance, it would be too late. The last remnant of the moon would soon be up, and afford some light, and the dawn could not be far off. Sail was shortened, and Dore undertook to stand in, with the lead going, till near enough to communicate with the vessel in distress. They were guided to the spot by the guns, which she continued firing at intervals. Bravely they stood on, till they could clearly see the flashes of the guns.

"The vessel is on some outer reef, or we should be able to see the shore by this time," observed Chase.

"Time to heave to, sir, or stand off, or we shall be there also," cried Dore, as the man in the chains sung out, "By the deep nine." "The water shoals here very rapidly."

The schooner's pinnace was fitted as a life-boat, and was capable of going through a great deal of heavy sea. Langston determined to put off in her, and so did his friends. There was no lack of volunteers. As the wind had fallen and now blew rather off the shore, the yacht could with safety be hove to. The boat approached the reef, guided by the bright flashes of the guns. A vessel could clearly be distinguished on the rocks. They shouted, to give notice to those on board that assistance was coming. The shout was returned. As they drew nearer they could clearly make out a schooner, with both her masts standing. As the wind had shifted since she got on the rocks, the force of the sea was broken by other rocks where she lay, and it was now possible to get close to her. The *Eugenie*'s boat approached.

"What schooner is that?" shouted Langston, with an anxious voice.

"The *Euphrosyne* yacht, Mr. Frank Ainslie owner," was the answer.

"Any one lost or hurt?" he asked.

"No, all right; but boat stove in and washed away."

"We must get alongside, and take the ladies out of her, my men," cried Langston. "Pull steadily in, and stand by to secure the ropes they will heave to us."

The boat was soon alongside. There was a good deal of commotion in the sea, but by fending off carefully the boat was kept from being swamped. Langston and Granville sprang on deck. They found the ladies alarmed, of course, but already cloaked and hooded, ready for embarking. They were carefully lowered into the boat, followed by Sir Stephen, who uttered some not very complimentary expressions towards Mr. Ainslie. Billy Smart appeared, but declined going, saying that he must stick by the ship.

"No, no, sir, you go," said the master. "Maybe we shall get her off at the top of high water, and then probably we shall be detained some days in Alderney repairing damages."

Master Smart was very easily on these grounds persuaded to leave the ship. It would be difficult to describe the delight of the ladies at discovering by whom they were rescued, or the happiness of their lovers at rescuing them. Sir Stephen vowed that he would never again go yachting, at all events with the Honourable Member for Muddleton, through whose obstinacy he had been so long tossed about on the stormy seas, and finally thrown on a rock where they had no business to be. Langston, like a wise man, struck while the iron was hot, and the baronet gave him full permission to marry his daughter; and of all the weather tossed yachts which entered Cherbourg Harbour, none contained a happier or merrier party than did the Eugenie.

THE CHASE OF THE HEIRESS.

CHAPTER I.

A BACHELOR OF THE ALBANY AND HIS MISTRESS.

As I entered his luxuriously-furnished bachelor rooms in the Albany, he rose from a piano, from which his fingers had been eliciting some melancholy notes, and, with the air of a man pretty utterly up, pointed to the sofa, and sank into an arm-chair opposite me.

"What's the matter?" I asked, observing his pale cheek and lack-lustre eye.

"That the world has become stale, flat, and unprofitable, and that, except to enjoy an occasional cigar, there is little in it worth living for. Try one." Pushing, as he spoke, a box of Havannahs across the table. Lighting one himself, he leaned back as if overcome with the exertion.

"Try falling in love," I said.

"Stale," he answered, with a look of ineffable disgust. "I've tried that."

"Scientific pursuits!" I suggested, in a no very confident tone. "You have a mind."

"Flat—Flat. Don't speak of such an idea," was his reply.

"Politics. Plunge into the excitement of a contested election!"

"Unprofitable—most unprofitable, and decidedly fatiguing. No man in his senses ever touches politics, in my opinion; which accounts for the idiotic way things are managed," he answered languidly.

"Travel!"

"What! be bored on the day of starting, and every successive day, and know that the farther one gets from home the longer must be the duration of the horrible process. How can you, my dear Frothyton, suggest so cruel an expedient!" he exclaimed, leaning slightly forward and then falling slowly back again.

I saw, however, that I had stirred him up a little, and a bright idea having that moment occurred to me, that I might mature it it threw myself back after my friend's example, and allowed a wreath of smoke from the fragrant weed which I held in my hand to curl upwards, and find its way through the open window. Smokers—especially yachtmen smokers—are, I have remarked, fond of dwelling on an idea when one has been caught, not allowing it to escape before the arrival of another as pleasing. Therein is wisdom. It is not given to all men[”]to conceive bright ideas with rapidity. It is impossible to predict when another may occur. Also the experience of yachtmen teaches them never to let a rope go with one hand till the other has got a firm hold. While ruminating on my idea, I may let it be known that my host was Sir Griffith Edgell, a young, good-looking baronet, with a very limited income, though the nominal owner of a remarkably fine but terribly encumbered estate.

“ Well, Frothy, what is it ? ” he at length asked, turning his half-shut eyes towards me.

“ This is my advice ”—I spoke deliberately—“ don't fall in love on any account. But—seek out a wealthy heiress with many suitors, win her in spite of them, and marry. This will afford you ample excitement for months to come.”

As I said this he opened his eyes wide and rose to his feet, standing on the rug with his coat-tails to the empty grate.

“ Frothyton, I thought that you knew me better than to propose such a thing ! ” he exclaimed, lifting up his harm unconsciously. “ The man who sells himself for money is a base hound ; he who sacrifices a woman's happiness, which he does if he marries her without affection, for his own selfish purposes, is no better ; and, rather than do either, I would start on an exploring expedition to the centre of Africa, join the next foreign legion to serve the Kaiser, the Pope, or some band of South American revolutionists, or I would go up in a balloon ; but really, my dear fellow, you must have fatigued yourself in conceiving such an idea, as you have me by mentioning it. I'll order sherry and seltzer-water for our mutual benefit.” And, ringing the bell, he sank back into his chair. “ You could not have been in earnest.”

“ No, indeed, honestly I was not,” I answered. “ I wished to rouse you out of your lethargy, and, now I see of what exertion you are capable, I must insist on your coming down with me to-morrow to join Harry Willoughby on board his yacht, the Wave, at Southampton, where she will come to receive us. He commissioned me not to leave you till you had accepted his invitation, and had promised to put your house in order to render your return for some months unnecessary.”

"A bachelor has little trouble on that letter point," he answered, glancing round the room. "Should I not come back, my cousin Dick will be duly thankful, and will walk in here and live as I have done. Thank Willoughby. I agree. I'll order Snell to pack my portmanteau."

CHAPTER II.

THE BACHELOR DISCOVERS HOW YACHTSMEN LIVE.

WILLOUGHBY's cutter, the Wave, of a hundred and ten tons, lay a little way down the Southampton Water, in sight of the town. Edgell was faithful to his engagement, and at the pier we found the Wave's gig ready to take us off to her, with his valet and three if not more portmanteaus, besides carpet-bags, a dressing-case, and writing-desk, which the latter had considered it necessary to bring for his master. Willoughby, with whom I had been cruising for some weeks past, was a very good fellow, with a comfortable ten thousand or more a year, but so impressed had he been by his lady-mother, I fancy, with the high value set on wealth, and so little with his own personal attractions, that, convinced if he made up to a girl without fortune she would marry him for his, he was on the look-out for one with money. This was a pity, as he was just the style of fellow many a girl would have married had he been only a subaltern in a marching regiment, and he might really have selected from among the best and choicest of England's daughters.

We had been cruising in the North Seas, and had lately come back for the regattas, undecided in what direction we should next turn the vessel's head.

Willoughby was delighted to see Edgell, who was, he knew, notwithstanding his assumed affectations, sterling at the core—the soul of honour. Sir Griffith's eye brightened as he looked round on the exquisitely clean deck, the brightly-polished brasswork, the delicately-painted bulwarks, the carved tiller, the large skylights, the snowwhite canvas and taunt mast, and, more than all, at the crew, a dozen broad-shouldered, whiskered fellows, in their white trousers and shoes, worked shirts, with the yacht's name on their hats, any one of them a prize on board a man-of-war; and then the master, Willis, in his gold-laced cap and anchor buttons, proud of the yacht, proud of the club to which she belonged, and prouder still of himself and his own seamanship.

Still more pleased was Sir Griffith when he got below, with the handsome main cabin, its swing mahogany tables and lamps, its luxurious sofas and chairs, its contrivances of all sorts, and the comfortable sleeping-berths, fitted with every convenience the most fastidious could require, the commodious pantry, and then the kitchen, shining with burnished copper, clean as a lady's boudoir—Soyer would have approved of it.

"You yachting men do live luxuriously," observed the young baronet, as he sunk on a sofa, which for comfort his own club could scarcely match. "I had no idea of the sort of thing. Why, Frothy, didn't you suggest yachting to me?"

"Because I might as well have suggested oyster-dredging. I wished you to try it first," I answered. "Wait till you have seen more of it."

After an exquisite luncheon, we got under weigh and ran across to Cowes. With regard to the cuisine, if Willoughby was not up to the matter, I flatter myself that I was so. I took care to have everything perfect, I having for this purpose secured the services of a well-trained cook, possessed of a high sense of the importance of his art, and laid in a store of every delicacy which Fortnum and Mason could supply; so I need say no more on that subject, except that it met with Sir Griffith's unqualified approbation on all occasions. He was still more pleased when we were under weigh, the sun shining, the blue water glittering, a fresh breeze filling our sails, vessels of all sizes and rigs gliding here and there, and we passing everything we came near.

"By Jove! she does walk the water like a thing of life," he exclaimed, as he paced the deck with more animation than I had ever before saw him exhibit.

Bright and glorious broke the morning of the chief day of the regatta. There was a strong gathering of the squadron, and a good number of yachts from Ireland, the West of England, and the Thames, had assembled, and now lay surrounding us with loosened sails, and different coloured burgees flying from their mastheads. A steamer or two, a few large merchantmen in the Roads, a man-of-war off Osborne, and the starting vessel dressed with flags, increased the gaiety of the scene.

"Frothy, I had no idea of it," said Sir Griffith, coming on deck in his dressing-gown, and inhaling the salt breeze with evident satisfaction.

During several subsequent days he frequently repeated the expression, as fresh experiences of yachting life came upon him. Now all was bustle, the racing yachts were taking up their berths, boats were pulling

to and fro, the smaller craft were getting under weigh and standing out from among the crowd. The first gun is fired, the gaily-dressed club-house is crowded with wealthy and noble spectators, the esplanade and quays are thronged with a less wealthy and more vociferous multitude, as are the vessels in the harbour and the decks of several steamers, spluttering and buzzing about like bluebottle flies in the sunshine. The second gun is fired, and like magic the racers are covered with a cloud of snow-white canvas, round go their heads, and off they dart for the Nab. We followed under all sail, and as the Wave did not go round the buoys, Sir Griffith had the opportunity of seeing the whole race.

"Beats horse-racing, which, by-the-by, never interested me much," he remarked; "lasts longer—more science—more thought—more healthy for mind and body—less risk of being cheated, and then one can take an active part in it."

CHAPTER III.

A COWES BALL, AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

In those days I used to go to balls, so did Willoughby, and without difficulty we induced Edgell, who declared himself up to anything, even, he really believed, to such an operation as dancing, to accompany us on the following evening to the club ball. It was a capital one. Many of the élite of London society graced it, and what with a few strangers from other parts, all the island belles, young ladies, some terrestrial, and others aquatic, in their habits, there was a good sprinkling of pretty girls.

I was talking with Willoughby and another man between the windows, not far from the orchestra, soon after we entered, when we observed Edgell (who was standing a little apart from us with his arms folded, not in the remotest degree aware that he looked sentimental or affected) direct a glance of no little interest across the room.

"By Jove! she is lovely," he exclaimed, in a tone of unusual earnestness, speaking rather to himself than to us. "Who can she be?"

"Do you mean one of those two girls with the old gentleman, who have just come in?" asked Willoughby, directing his glances the way our friend was looking.

"Of course; the sweet young creature who leans on the right arm

of that fine old man near the door," answered the baronet, in a tone which showed that he was rather annoyed at the expression of his feelings having been overheard.

"Oh, ah ! she's a sparkling beauty, certainly—looks as if she would be light in hand as a waltzer. I must see about getting introduced to her," observed Willoughby, in his usual nonchalant tone.

"Good Heavens ! don't speak of her in that way," exclaimed Edgell, with unwonted vehemence. "She's a perfect seraph—an angel of light. I never till now believed in the existence of such perfect loveliness."

"I rather like the look of the other girl the old gentleman has in tow," observed Willoughby, again scanning the party through his glass. "She isn't so seraphic, perhaps, but she is what I prefer—a very fine creature. There's an air of good breeding about her which I admire."

"I must, at all events, learn who they are," exclaimed Edgell, moving away.

"Stop ! Here comes Bubble. He knows everybody and everything, and will save you the trouble," said Willoughby.

"I am not personally acquainted, but know all about them," answered Bubble (a yachting Isle of Wight friend of ours of long standing) to the inquiries showered on him. "The old gentleman is Colonel Danvers, as rich as Croesus, it is said, and that fine girl is his only daughter and heiress. The pretty, modest-looking creature" (so Bubble described Edgell's seraph), "is a niece or cousin—a poor dependent—a Miss Avening—but the colonel is very fond of her. She always yachts with them, and I believe can steer the vessel better than any man on board."

"What, are they yachting here now ?" asked Willoughby.

"Yes, the colonel owns the Medora schooner ; only came in three days ago ; sails shortly for the Mediterranean."

"What, do the ladies sail in her ?" asked Sir Griffith, who had in vain attempted to conceal the interest he felt from Bubble, who was almost a stranger to him.

"Oh yes, they live on board," answered Bubble. "If you like, Sir Griffith, I can get you introduced to them."

The baronet winced a little at the idea of being introduced through Bubble, who was, by-the-by, as well born as himself, but his eagerness getting the better of his pride, he answered :

"Thank you ; but I am giving you too much trouble, and I so seldom dance."

"Not the slightest. I like it. It's my vocation," answered Bubble. "They don't know many men in the room, and will be glad of an eligible partner; but dance you must."

Sir Griffith looked as if he wished that he had not engaged our volatile friend in his service. The latter, hurrying off, buzzed about the crowd with a word and a smile for everyone, still following up his object, till he returned with a somewhat stout dame, Lady Piony, whom I knew as the mother of six Honourable Miss Roseblossoms. He beckoned to Sir Griffith, who could not help advancing.

"Allow me, Lady Piony, to introduce to you my friend Sir Griffith Edgell, yachting with Harry Willoughby," quoth Bubble; adding in an undertone, "If gentle perusasion is used he is a dancing man, and with this hint I leave him in your ladyship's hands."

A baronet possessed of youth, good looks, and the power of dancing, is seldom despised by mammas with six spinster daughters, for even if not matrimonially disposed, he may be turned to an account. In a few minutes afterwards we saw Sir Griffith and his seraph whirling round the room to the animating music of a waltz. Willoughby, thanks to the exertions of the indefatigable Bubble, was shortly afterwards engaged for a quadrille to the heiress.

Seeing my friends thus satisfactorily occupied, I devoted myself, as was my wont in those days, to that sweet little smiling beauty Rose Rowaway, still as engaging as ever as the true and faithful wife of Sir Richard Pullhard, the owner of the *Miranda* schooner. As I expected, in a short time I saw Edgell dancing with one of the Honourable Miss Roseblossoms. He looked certainly as if he was performing a meritorious act, which he had considered it his duty to undertake, his eye notwithstanding wandering round and round the room, and only lighting up when it fell on the fair stranger. I felt a curiosity, not very usual with me, to know more of her, and falling in with old Bubble, I got him to introduce me. She accepted my offer with a gracious smile, and when I talked about Edgell and the yacht, I thought that she seemed interested. Of course I praised him, and to the best of my recollection I spoke of his being a fine amiable fellow, although not blessed with an income of sufficient magnitude for his rank and position in society. I bewailed the misfortune of men like him, with sense, talent, and many amiable and sterling qualities, who from want of forethought, or the folly of their parents or guardians, have not been brought up to a profession by which, with honourable exertion, they could maintain themselves and create the fortune they require. Edgell contemplated going to the Bar or seeking some government employment, but to a man of his age and habits neither were likely to realise his expectations.

"Then had Sir Griffith Edgell at one time a larger property than he now possesses?" she asked.

"No, but he expected to have a very much larger, which comes to nearly the same thing. The disappointment is as great," I replied. "On succeeding to the property he discovered that it was so encumbered by his predecessors that he could not possibly live on the estate. He therefore at once manfully set to work to meet the difficulties with which he was surrounded, let the house and grounds, and the shooting and fishing, and sold whatever he could—a few pictures and timber—and reserved for himself only some three or four hundred a year. Notwithstanding all this, he doubts whether his son would benefit much, if he ever has one, though his grandson——"

"Your friend is an honourable and sensible man," observed Miss Avening. "It is refreshing to hear of people acting as he has done. I only wish, for his sake, that he had a profession in which he could exert his energies and talents. It is sad to see such a man compelled to spend life in idleness, though I hold that all men, and women too, can find useful employment if they seek it."

"Such as yachting, for instance," I remarked, to see what she would say. "I am afraid that that is very idle work."

"Not at all; it may serve to restore the energies and strength of a person when other means have failed. It is the noblest amusement, taken only as an amusement, in which Englishmen can engage. It trains seamen for the navy, employs a number of people in a healthy manner, and consequently supports their families, who are thus able to live comfortably and happily, and improve their moral and intellectual condition. Thus I feel that not only those actually owning yachts and sailing in them increase their enjoyment, but a large number of other persons who build and fit out the yachts, or are supported by those who do. In my opinion the great object of our life should be to increase the sum total of human happiness as far as we have the power, and each person has that power in a far greater degree than he or she supposes."

I saw from this and similar remarks that Miss Avening was an original and independent thinker, and probably a doer also; in fact, I began to admire her considerably, and to consider that it was a pity she should not have the means of independent action, as it is given to the poorest to have of thought. I had managed to enjoy her society during another quadrille and waltz, when Lady Piony came bustling up, followed by a highly bewhiskered, moustachioed, and well-dressed gentleman, with that look and expression of countenance which bespeaks the man of the world, and not the best part of it. He was dressed in the extreme

of fashion, with rather more adornment of gold chains and rings, &c., than gentlemen generally wear, and still it could not be said that he did not look like a gentleman. He might have been almost any age between thirty-five and fifty-five, for he was evidently well got up, his features were not bad, but there was a rigidity about them generally possessed by those devoted to the turf, and his eyes had that grey, cold, unsympathetic expression which is my aversion in a man, and my dread and horror in a woman, while his mouth, even his thick moustache could not conceal its sensual expression; yet he was a man who was sure to make his way among stout dowagers and in a certain class of society. It was easy to see that Lady Piony thought a great deal of him, while the Miss Roseblossoms looked upon him as an Adonis in the costume of the nineteenth century.

"My dear Miss Avening," began her ladyship, bringing forward her follower with a smile she intended to be very captivating, "allow me to introduce to your especial notice our friend Colonel O'Carroll, of Carrick Killeban Castle I need scarcely say, of Ireland. He was the constant companion of my dear husband, Lord Piony, while his lordship was spared to me, which alone stamps his position in society, independent of his rank in the army," she whispered. "And, my dear, he has long been desirous of being introduced to you; he tells me you have created a—a—what shall I call it?—a sensation in his—his—what shall I—his heart, my dear; no slight triumph, let me tell you."

The Colonel was supposed not to hear these remarks. I know that I did. Miss Avening looked very much annoyed, but either had not presence of mind to refuse him, or thought that she ought not to do so or was curious to ascertain more about the man; at all events, she consented to dance the next quadrille with him. I was rather vexed that she should do so, but still I felt that I was wronging her in being vexed. Lady Piony gave me a very broad hint to dance with one of the Miss Roseblossoms, but I felt just then more inclined to stand still against the wall and watch proceedings, so that I would not even cross the room to ask Rose Rowaway, who I saw for a wonder sitting quiet. I observed Colonel O'Carroll begin immediately, in the most systematic manner, to pay court to Miss Avening. Every look and gesture of his was, I saw, under the most perfect command, and he brought them skilfully into play to suit his purpose. I had known perfectly from the first how he would proceed, but I was curious to see how she would receive his attentions, and whether she was worthy of the high character I had formed of her. At first I was inclined to be disappointed; then, judging by her changed look he had mistaken her character and had

presumed somewhat, the next instant he was deferential, and giving expression to some sentiment with which no fault could be found, she was evidently puzzled, but yet far from satisfied with his character. He was not the man to let a partner, in whom for any reason he might wish to excite an interest, go free after the first dance, so he kept her engaged, under one pretext or another, while a waltz and polka were being danced, till I saw her half break from him and take the arm of her uncle, whom she saw at a little distance. Edgell had also, I suspected, been watching her, and no sooner had she done this, than he was again at her side, and had engaged her for another dance. He seemed determined, if he could, to keep off the Irish colonel. He need not have been anxious, had he observed the different expression with which she looked up into his face while he was speaking, to that with which she had regarded the latter gentleman. He had resolved on a somewhat difficult undertaking, for Colonel O'Carroll was evidently an able strategist, with an unbounded amount of impudence and assurance, and more than once foiled him. Whether or not the colonel gained by so doing in the good opinion of the young lady, it was difficult to say. Indeed, highly as I thought of Miss Avening, I have seen so many nice girls taken in by unprincipled pretenders, that, supposing Colonel O'Carroll to be what I fancied from the expression of his eye, I should have been very sorry to have trusted her if left long under his influence.

Meantime, Willoughby had been introduced to Miss Danvers and her father, and had been busily employed in paying the young lady attention, and in ingratiating himself with her father. So far had he succeeded, that he and Sir Griffith obtained leave to call on board the Medora. As Colonel Danver's yacht had also to undergo some slight repairs, he accepted an invitation on the part of his daughter and niece to take a cruise in the Wave on the following day round the Isle of Wight, should the wind and tide prove favourable. Willoughby, feeling himself indebted to Lady Piony, and understanding that she was a friend of the Danverses, invited her and her daughters, the six Honourable Miss Roseblossoms. Old Bubble and a few other people had been asked, when Lady Piony came up to Willoughby, and begged leave to bring a friend. "A great friend of my poor dear departed lord," she added, "Colonel O'Carroll." Willoughby, not having made the observations on the gentleman in question which I had, could only say that he should be very happy to see any friend of Lady Piony's, and we therefore were saddled with a person with whose company, had Willoughby known him, he would have been most anxious to dispense.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCES FURTHER PARTICULARS RESPECTING THE MYSTERIOUS VILLAIN OF THE DRAMA.

WILLOUGHBY and Edgell had taken lodgings on shore, but as I always, when living on board a yacht, go off to her at night unless the weather is very bad, I had ordered one of the men to come for me at daybreak, before which time I calculated that the ball would scarcely be over. I, however, left rather sooner than I had intended, and having my boat-cloak, I wrapped myself in it, and sat down under the shelter of some large blocks of stone prepared for alterations about to be made in the quay. I had been sitting there for some time, and, after growing impatient at the non-arrival of the boat, had begun to doze, I suspect, when I became conscious that some people were speaking near me.

"I tell you it is my last chance. I must win, or be ruined," said one of the speakers, grinding his teeth. "Will you, or will you not help me? A couple of hundred pounds now would save me from beggary, and set me on my legs again. The girl is worth a great deal herself, and I have determined to stake everything I possess for the sake of her."

"The stake is not large whatever the prize may prove," said the other speaker, with a satirical laugh, and I was persuaded that the first was no other than Colonel O'Carroll. "As to helping you, my friend, you and I know each other of old, and that is out of the question, unless I take a firmer grip of you than is compatible with friendship; but I tell you what I'll do, I'll give you a note to a worthy Israelite at Portsmouth, and if you are content to put yourself in his hands, and he can make a penny out of you, he will."

"Faith, I'd put myself in the hands of his Satanic Majesty himself, for that matter, to attain my object," exclaimed Colonel O'Carroll.

"Well, then, Simon Levi will help you if anyone can, but I warn you that he will be somewhat hard on you if you fail," said his companion.

"By my troth, he must be accustomed to crush flints then," answered the colonel, now laughing in his turn. "Give me the note, and I'll make good use of it, depend on that."

Eaves-dropping is not a pleasant occupation, and I was very thankful when the speakers moved off. I had heard enough to convince me that I was right in the opinion I had formed of Colonel O'Carroll, but I

was puzzled to know of whom he was speaking. He could scarcely be scheming to marry Miss Avening, to whom he had been paying attention during the evening, as a fortune-hunter would certainly have chosen her cousin before her. I therefore concluded that he must have alluded to some other lady, and that he had been merely amusing himself for once in a way by paying attention to a pretty girl without any ultimate object.

Curiously enough, on getting on board I found a letter from an old friend asking me, as I was near Portsmouth, to go and see the very Jew I had heard mentioned, Simon Levi, with whom a scapegrace ward of his had been having some transactions, which he was anxious to get settled with as little law as possible.

I of course resolved to go the very first day I was disengaged, though there appeared to be no immediate hurry about the matter.

The trite proverb was realised the next day, "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip." The night had been lovely, but when I turned out in the morning there was every sign of a blowing day, which would disappoint the fair yachtswomen who were to honour us with their company. When towards noon the badness of the weather left no doubt about the matter, I begged Willoughby to let me run over to Portsmouth to execute my friend's commission. I was shown into the back office of Mr. Simon Levi, who himself soon after appeared. Instead of the cunning, old, long-bearded, blear-eyed Jew I had expected to see, he was a well-dressed, rather good-looking, and not ungentlemanly young man, with a manner which might lead the easily-pleased to suppose that his whole life was spent in loving efforts to do all the good in his power to his fellow-creatures.

By an exhibition of firmness, I had nearly brought my business to a conclusion, when Colonel O'Carroll was announced. As we were waiting for some stamps, Mr. Levi requested that I would walk into a little room opposite, while he spoke to the colonel. Whether purposely or not I could not tell, but he left the door ajar, so that I could hear nearly all that took place. There was no question, from what I heard, whether the Jew or Christian—if such the colonel called himself—was the greatest rogue. He had formed his plans, according to his own ideas, in an admirable manner, and exhibited more eagerness to carry them out than I should have expected would have been the case in a man of his character. The ever wary Jew seemed not quite certain how far the eagerness was assumed to throw him off his guard—so I thought, for it was evidently diamond cut diamond. I could not hear the whole of the conversation, but sufficient of what was said reached my ears to let

me understand that the colonel was to borrow about eight hundred pounds, and that he was to obtain a fine yacht, which he was to mortgage to the Jew as security for the money advanced. With the sum advanced he was to keep up the yacht till he could win the heiress. He was then to let the Jew take the yacht or repay the loan, as might suit him best. As to paying for the yacht, that seemed a matter of no consideration with the colonel. I could only hope that the person who sold her to him could well afford to go without payment. The matter was at all events speedily settled. It seemed to be a sort of transaction in which both parties had frequently before been engaged. The colonel, well satisfied it appeared, took his departure, and I then went back and concluded the business I had undertaken. While speaking to the Jew, I could not help fancying that he had more of the milk of human kindness in his composition than the world in general would give him credit for, and that there yet lingered on his countenance an expression of pity, not for the loser in the yacht-dealing transaction, but for the hopeless victim, should the scoundrel he had been speaking to succeed in his plans. In the matter I had arranged, the Jew had, I am bound to say, behaved in a perfectly straightforward, honest manner. As I left the house I almost ran against the colonel, who had apparently gone up the street, and was returning towards the harbour to embark. He recognised me as having seen me the previous evening at the ball, dancing with Miss Danvers and her cousin. He gave me a look as much as to say, "Ho ! ho ! are you one of us ?"

That look reminded me of an anecdote told me a few years ago by the poet Longfellow, whom I visited at Boston. There exists in New York a very well conducted institution, which writes begging letters, for those who apply for them and pay a proper fee, to all parts of the Union, or the world, indeed, and grants letters of introduction, and testimonials as to character and abilities, to those who wish to carry on transactions with people of fortune, or those capable of paying, in every direction. Mr. Longfellow had learned a good deal about this establishment when at New York, when one day an Italian appeared at his house at Boston, with a well drawn-up petition and admirable certificates. On looking over the documents, he was convinced whence they had emanated, and returning them to the man, told him not to expect anything, as he was well acquainted with their origin and the people who wrote them. "*Oh, signore, perdona, siete uno di loro?*" (Are you one of them ?) said the man, taking the papers back with a smile.

Just so did Colonel O'Carroll look at me, and seem to say, "Ho ! ho ! are you a bird of the same feather as myself ?"

CHAPTER V.

SIR GRIFFITH PROVES HIMSELF TO BE A TRUE HERO, AND THE HEROINE THINKS HIM ONE.

THE next day was fine, as sea-nymphs in crinolines, mutton-pie hats, or tarpaulins, could desire, and at an early hour, with the aid of our chef on board, and a pastry-cook on shore, we commenced making preparations for the reception of our expected guests. Willoughby and Sir Griffith, I observed, dressed with even more than their usual care, though possibly they might not have acknowledged having done so. I undertook to go in one of the yacht's boats to superintend the embarkation at the club steps. The first to appear was Lady Piony, followed by the six Honourable Miss Roseblossoms, escorted by Colonel O'Carroll, who, his arms full of shawls and cloaks, walked along with a self-satisfied jaunty air, talking blandly and smiling, now towards one, now towards the other, they in return chattering and giggling, and looking highly pleased, if the Honourable Miss Roseblossoms could have giggled or chattered like ordinary mortals. The colonel gave me a familiar nod of recognition when he saw me, as I stood prepared to hand in the ladies, an undertaking which, in the case of Lady Piony, required no little caution, lest a too great exhibition of agility should have sent her ladyship overboard on the other side. I cannot say that I felt very much disposed to return the brotherhood sign of scoundrelism, but recollecting my intention of endeavouring to unmask the man, I answered with a similar nod. He had, meantime, planted himself firmly in the other boat, into which three of the Miss Roseblossoms tripped lightly, Lady Piony having called the fourth to bear her company. Had I been the mother of the young ladies I would as soon have entrusted them to Mephistopheles, or to Don Juan himself, as to such a man as Colonel O'Carroll, without even knowing what I did about him. Five or six more visitors came down, some of whom got into my boat, while the rest bestowed themselves in his, and at length I gave the order to shove off.

The men, who had been sitting with their oars raised perpendicularly in the air, let them fall simultaneously, with the flats of the blades into the water, the sound of one splash alone reaching our ears, while scarcely a sparkling drop rose from them, and away we glided towards the Wave. The Danvers party had just before reached her decks. Colonel O'Carroll bowed to them, with a bland smile on his countenance,

though neither of the young ladies put out their hands to welcome him ; indeed, judging by their countenances, they were far from pleased at seeing him. He was not a man to be abashed, but instantly turned away, and began talking and laughing with the other ladies, till he had managed to draw them into conversation, when gradually, with a good deal of tact, he turned his attention almost exclusively to them. My old friend Bubble, who had been in his time the owner of numerous yachts, and had sailed in innumerable matches, and had never missed a Cowes Regatta for thirty years or more, was of the party, and being evidently no admirer of the colonel, came opportunely to their help. The Miss Roseblossoms seemed rather annoyed at the way their colonel, as they called him, treated them, though they derived some consolation from the attention paid them by a young Oxford divine, the Rev. Reginald Rubrick, who had lately got into some trouble with his bishop, and had come down to the Island at the expense of the small portion of his parishioners who gave him their support.

He had had the exquisitely good taste, it appeared, on the restoration of his church, to wreath it throughout with flowers, to adorn a large crucifix placed in a conspicuous position in a similar manner, to place lighted candles on the altar, to appear himself, with several of his clerical brethren—birds of a feather—in embroidered vestments, and to deck even his churchwardens in similar habiliments, and then, knowing the strong objection of his bishop to such proceedings, to invite his lordship to preside at the ceremony.

The bishop had, I believe, puffed out the candles, directed the floral wreaths—fit adornments for a heathen temple of classic form—to be removed, the mummers to unrobe, and the design of an altar-piece, sketched in chalk, of true mediæval character, to be obliterated, and then went through with the ceremony at which he had come to preside. The parishioners, possessed of tolerable good sense, sided with the bishop ; the Rev. Reginald fell back upon the rubric, ignoring obedience to superiors ; the unwise sided with him, and he, eagerly embracing the crown of martyrdom in prospect, left his parish in charge of a beardless and as harmless a youth, and came away to amuse himself. I heard the whole story repeated to the six Miss Roseblossoms and their mother three times, and he was beginning again to tell it to Miss Danvers and her cousin, when Bubble looked up and asked, “ My dear sir, by which side of his mouth did the bishop blow out the candles, or did he employ the puff direct ? ”

“ Sir, I consider it next to blasphemy to make light of holy things,” exclaimed the Rev. Reginald, growing irate.

"So I suppose did the bishop, and therefore he blew out the lights, my dear sir," quoth Bubble, in a gentle voice, which contrasted strangely with that of the angry young vicar.

The latter gained very little compassion, except from the Miss Roseblossoms; even Lady Piony remarked that she thought the bishop must have been right, as Lord Piony always voted with him. But enough of the subject.

We had every prospect of a fine sail with a brisk breeze, such as a yachtsman and most yachting ladies best love. The sight, too, was very beautiful, as sheets of snow-white canvas rose rapidly, here and there seen against the wooded heights above Cowes, and the long sleeping burgees, white, red, and blue, flew out from the mastheads of the yachts. The breeze freshened, the anchor was hove up, and off we darted, threading our way among the yet stationary vessels till all sail was got on the cutter, and, heeling over gracefully to the breeze, we stood down the Solent Channel for Hurst Castle and the Needles. Around us were many other vessels—schooners, cutters, and yawls, and a lugger or two. There was a steam-yacht going head to wind to show the sailing craft how superior she was to them, and there was Mr. Acker's large three-masted square topsail schooner *Brilliant*, a fine full-rigged ship, in reality—a craft of which yachtsmen might well be proud, as belonging to one of their number. The wind was northerly, the air fresh and pure, the sky bright, the water, just rippled into mimic wavelets, sparkling with light and life. I had never seen Sir Griffith so animated.

"This is delightful!" he exclaimed, as he took a rapid turn on deck, and again stopped near Miss Avening, as if anxious to express to her his feelings of delight.

"I am glad you like yachting, Sir Griffith," she observed, in answer to the remark he had made to her. "I love the green land and the numberless beauties of the country, but still more do I delight in the boundless sea, blue and bright as now and glittering in sunshine, or when silvered over by the soft moonlight. I love it when a fresh breeze is blowing, or even during a calm, when smooth as a mirror and glowing like polished metal; still more when the gale tosses it madly up and down, and huge billows chase each other across its surface, frothing and foaming, and the vessel plunges onward, now sinking into the trough, now rising proudly to the summit of the sea; and yet, trusting to our stout, well-found bark and the skill of our hardy crew, we feel as secure as in the most luxurious of drawing-rooms, and freer and happier by far than most of those who never tempt the dangers of the deep, as

they are called. Oh ! Sir Griffith, have you ever seen the ocean sleeping in the moonlight ?—have you ever been on it tossed by the snorting breeze ? "

She stopped, looked up ; her eye had kindled, her whole countenance was full of animation. Sir Griffith had been watching her with intense admiration. Evidently her enthusiasm had carried her away. In all his experience he had never known any young lady speak as she had done, yet there was nothing affected in what she said, no straining for effect—the words flowed rapidly from her lips as the ideas arose to her mind ; yet, when she stopped, she blushed slightly and laughed, as if conscious that she had allowed her feelings to run away with her, and then she added :—

" I don't know, by-the-bye, whether the last word is poetically the correct one, or should it be the snoring breeze ? No, no, I do not like that word. It must be snorting, like the noble charger eager for the race, the chase, or the headlong charge. The sea does make a noise, I own, like some huge animal snoring, but surely not like a clown asleep. I prefer the other word, don't you ? "

Sir Griffith was far too much occupied in considering how he should answer the first question, very clearly to comprehend the second, and certainly not to reply directly to it ; so, looking at her admiringly, he answered, in a tone as if he were ashamed of himself :

" No, never. I have never enjoyed the moonlight on the sea, though I have read about it, but I will—I will. I must ask you to show it to me ; it will then be exquisite ; and I should like to be in a fierce gale, too. But I am sure that I should be happier if you were safe on shore."

It was now Miss Avening's turn to be slightly confused.

" Oh ! I thought that we were speaking of the term which most appropriately in poetical language describes a strong breeze," she observed. " But you don't know how I delight in a gale. I should not be at all happier on shore."

I could not hear what else was said, for the voices of the speakers sank insensibly lower and lower. It is my opinion that those two young people were at that moment indissolubly united by that " silver link, that silver tie, which heart to heart, and mind to mind, in body and in soul can bind ; " if they were not, then they were very soon afterwards. Still we must remember that that silver link may be broken, rudely snapped asunder, never again to be united on earth, but as surely to be joined in heaven if the silver is sterling—not too much of the dross of earth in it ; a little—I hope that a little is allowable, though it must

assuredly all disappear up there on high. I had watched O'Carroll. He, too, had been an attentive observer of what was taking place. From what I knew of him, however, I was certain that Miss Avening could not be his ultimate aim, but that he hoped to win her cousin, the heiress, by means of some deep-laid plot, through her. I at the same time resolved, if possible, to defeat it, though I did not see at the moment clearly how that was to be done. I knew the colonel to be a scoundrel, but I own that I was not possessed of that amount of heroism which would enable me to denounce him as such, with the probability that I should be unable to prove my assertion true. The breeze increased, the Wave heeled over more and more to it, and was now going through the water at her full racing speed. Lady Piony did not half like it; the Rev. Reginald Rabrick did not like it at all.

"Your ladyship—Miss Roseblossom—don't you think this a fearful, a most unwarrantable risking of our lives?" he exclaimed, with an appealing glance at the only two people on board who appeared to sympathise with him. "What would my poor dear people do if anything was to happen to me?"

"Can't you swim, my dear sir?" asked the colonel, with a smile of contempt, glad of an opportunity of showing his superiority in the presence of the heiress, I thought.

"Yes; that is to say—But not in so terrific a sea as this," answered the Rev. Reginald. "And to which shore should I swim?"

"Terrific!" exclaimed the colonel, with a laugh. "And to which shore should you swim? you ask. To either, of course; the feat is easy enough. I would do it if the stake were high enough—had I a Hero to swim for, for example. The present Sir John Simeon, I am told, as a young man, swam across from the island to the mainland without fatigue, and no man has done a thing which I would not undertake to do."

We were at the time below Yarmouth Castle, and between it and Hurst. I could corroborate the statement made by the colonel. Sir John and his tutor agreed to perform the feat of swimming from Yarmouth Castle to Hurst. Looking at the distance between the two places, it appeared as if the feat was impossible, yet Sir John performed it without difficulty, and was so fresh on landing at Hurst that he was able to swim back to join his tutor, who, almost overcome, could scarcely make way. The seeming difficulty vanishes when it is seen that the two places almost overlap each other, and thus starting with the first of the ebb, they had only to swim out a certain distance and allow themselves to drop down to the northern shore.

The colonel continued boasting for some time longer of his performances both as a swimmer and diver, but whether any one besides the Miss Roseblossoms gave credence to his assertions, seemed doubtful. By this time, however, the breeze had increased so much, that, without the warning screams in which Lady Piony and her eldest daughter had begun to indulge, it became necessary to haul down the gaff-topsail, then to shift jibs, and finally, in consequence of having ladies on board, whose elegant costumes might have suffered, to take down two reefs in the mainsail. There was some delay in shortening sail, and the Wave, thus brought under snugger canvas, made much less way through the water than before; but what she lost in speed, we on board undoubtedly gained in comfort. Several other vessels, however, caught us up, and there were nearly half a dozen yachts standing out together through the Needles passage.

A cutter carrying a press of sail, with several ladies on board, had just before passed us.

"I cannot say much for that fellow's seamanship," I had just before observed to Willoughby; meaning that of the man who professed to sail her.

A ledge of rocks runs out from the Needles deep under water towards the mainland. It is called the Bridge of the Needles, and when there is a breeze, and the tide runs strong, there is always some sea on it. There was on the present occasion. The cutter I spoke of had just got on it, when terrified and reiterated shrieks reached our ears. The ladies on board were throwing up their arms wildly, and pointing frantically to the water, where a youth was seen struggling in the foaming seas. The men on board the yacht did not seem to know what to do. Some ran to lower a boat, but before that could be done, and the vessel hove-to, she must have shot far away from the drowning lad. He, it was evident, had no notion of swimming.

"Now, Colonel O'Carroll, is your time!" cried Willoughby, as he and I began pulling off our coats, neither of us being good swimmers. But before we could do so, and while the colonel, turning pale, was stammering out some excuse, Sir Griffith had sprung, dressed as he was, from the side, and was striking out nobly towards the youth, whom he encouraged with a shout, telling him to throw himself on his back and float. The ladies, when they saw this, ceased shrieking, and seemed to be expressing their thanks, but they had already got some way off. Neither did Miss Avening nor the heiress utter a word, but there was a look of satisfaction, of intense interest in the countenance of the former which I could not help remarking—not a particle of fear

or doubt that Sir Griffith would succeed in his gallant effort to save the lad's life. We of course had immediately to heave-to, but it was a very critical place to do so, with the wind as it then was, and there would have been a great risk of our being driven on the rocks, had the tide been at flood. Such would have been the fate of the other vessel, had she not, seeing her danger, stood on till she was at sufficient distance to shorten sail. Bravely Sir Griffith swam on. He was evidently practised in the art. Had a gun gone off by her side, I don't believe that Miss Avening would have heeded it, so intently did she watch him. There was just that bubbling, chopping sea which makes swimming very trying. On he went, his eye on the struggling youth. I doubt if he was thinking then of Miss Avening. To save that lad was the work he had to do, and he was trying to do it like a true man. Such are alone deserving of, and are sure to win, woman's true love. Our gig was lowered, and I, with four hands, jumped into her. Sir Griffith had reached the lad, who, though approached cautiously, as a drowning man should be, had in his struggles seized the baronet, and was clinging to him convulsively. This I have no doubt was seen from the Wave. We pulled on, for there was no time to be lost. Already he had been pulled under water, but the youth had become insensible, and he rose again. We reached him, and lifted him into the boat with his burden. The Wave had been compelled to fill again, but we were soon up to her, and Sir Griffith, with the young gentleman he had saved, was assisted up the side. "Thank Heaven!" escaped from Miss Avening's lips, as she saw him, exhausted and pale as death, reach the deck. Unromantic truth. He hurried below, without waiting to receive the congratulations and compliments showered on him, took a stiff tumbler of hot brandy-and-water, changed his clothes, and was soon on deck again, not a bit the worse for his adventure. No one, however, would have doubted that he would have had little difficulty in winning the richest and most desirable of a dozen heiresses, had as many of that most desirable class of the fair sex been on board. The young gentleman took longer coming round. We signalled the yacht that he was safe, and as soon as he was recovered sufficiently, we bore down on her, and restored him, wrapped in blankets, to his friends.

The Miss Roseblossoms declared that they were so glad to hear that he was a young gentleman—as if his being so enhanced the value of Sir Griffith's gallantry. By the scorn expressed in Miss Avening's features, she did not agree with them, and truth compels me to state that the lad was an arrand muff, and I suspect that society would have been very little, if at all, the loser had he gone to the bottom.

We had a perfect sail in every respect, and reached Cowes harbour in time for a yacht tea, to partake of which we adjourned on board the Medora.

CHAPTER VI.

BY WHICH A LESSON HOW TO GET A YACHT CHEAPLY MAY BE LEARNED.

I WAS convinced that Colonel O'Carroll had no design on the heart and hand of Miss Avening, for, supposing him to be a man of any discernment, he must have known, I thought, from what he had seen on board the Wave, that Sir Griffith Edgell was sure of winning her, or had won her already. I am only giving, it must be understood, the opinion I had formed at the time, before I was aware of circumstances which afterwards came to my knowledge. We had dined once on board the Wave on a blowing day, when neither yacht could get under weigh, and a very pleasant evening we spent. We had some delightful music. There was a very good cottage piano on board, and both ladies sang well. Miss Avening certainly the best, and Sir Griffith, who also had a fine, cultivated voice, and was an enthusiastic lover of music, told us afterwards that she must have been taught by a very first-rate master or mistress. Other guests had been expected from the shore, but, in consequence of the bad weather, could not get off. I did my best to amuse Colonel Danvers, Willoughby devoted himself to the heiress, much, it seemed, to her satisfaction, while Sir Griffith, who never himself did anything by half, and would not let others do so if he could help it, monopolised the whole attention of Miss Avening. Colonel Danvers made many inquiries of me about Colonel O'Carroll. He seemed not to like him at all, and after he found that my opinion was not favourable, he told me that he should have declined his acquaintance, but that Lady Piony spoke so highly of him, and made so great a point of introducing him, that he could not refuse to make his acquaintance. After this we never allowed a day to pass without making a visit on board the Medora. Sometimes we sailed in company and carried on a telegraphic communication, but, of course, more frequently we went on board and let the Wave follow. This sort of thing went on for a week, or more, when one forenoon, while we were still at anchor, I observed a fine schooner standing in for the Roads. She was a yacht from her appearance, but had no burgee at her mast-head. From this it was probable that she

was a perfectly new vessel. We were all on deck watching her, for she was coming directly towards us. Sir Griffith had a telescope in his hand. I was looking in another direction, when I heard him exclaim, "The scoundrel! He has succeeded, then!" I, of course, had told him of O'Carroll's scheme, and I, therefore, knew of whom he was speaking. I turned round, and, as the schooner approached, the colonel was seen standing on deck, and apparently in command of her. She passed close to us; he waved his hand in friendly recognition, and then rounding to, brought up close to the Medora. There could be no doubt as to what were his intentions.

"What's to be done?" I asked. "We cannot let that fellow play any tricks here."

"Call him out and shoot him!" cried Willoughby. "I could do it willingly."

"Checkmate him," said Sir Griffith, quietly. "The other proceeding would be a foolish one, and abominably wicked into the bargain. I have no sympathy with duellists. That fellow is not worth powder and shot, in spite of his commission, if he holds one, and I could not find his name in the Army List."

"Would not that be sufficient to expose him?" I observed.
"It is doubtful how far his impudence would not carry him. He would declare that he was in the Austrian, or some other foreign service," answered Sir Griffith. "I have too much confidence in the sense of the young ladies to suppose for a moment that he will succeed, though his assurance may cause them a great deal of annoyance."

"I agree with you, Edgell, certainly—certainly!" exclaimed Willoughby. "He would never succeed with Miss Danvers."

"And as assuredly he would not with Miss Avening," cried the baronet."

However, notwithstanding our united opinion of him, not many days had passed before Colonel O'Carroll, or, as I found he called himself, The O'Carroll, became the rage among people at Cowes—not the residents, of course, they to this day may not have heard much about him. The O'Carroll's new yacht, the Phantom, The O'Carroll himself, and the entertainments he gave on board, and his titled guests, and a variety of other subjects, were in the mouths of everybody. Tradesmen, of course, were anxious to be patronised by the colonel, and he most obligingly gratified them. He talked of paying immediately, but did not, which was satisfactory, as it showed that he was likely to come again, which he did. He was a most liberal purchaser—never haggled about price, and was ready to give as large an order as they could wish

for. Lady Piony and the Miss Roseblossoms were among the most constant of his guests—indeed, they were on board every day, often accompanied by the Rev. Reginald Rubrick, to whose opinions on ecclesiastical affairs he had expressed himself warmly attached, and had promised his support with a sum which he hinted might amount to some eight thousand pounds or so, towards the erection of a new church in his parish. The colonel, although he had given promises alone with a large amount of flattery, gained a valuable ally in the Rev. Reginald. We found ourselves completely in the background, and the wealthy colonel threw even the handsome young baronet into the shade. A great pic-nic was planned to Netley—Lady Piony undertook to ask the ladies and any gentlemen she knew. We received an invitation from her ladyship, so did the heiress and her cousin. Colonel O'Carroll did not appear in the matter. We resolved to make our going depend on the Danvers party. They had heard a rumour that Colonel O'Carroll was to provide the entertainment, and, if so, they had determined not to go. They had, therefore, sent no answer. While matters were in this state, we saw the Phantom's boat, with the colonel in her, pull towards the Medora. She remained alongside for a considerable time. Colonel Danvers was on shore, and we were, therefore, anxious to know what took place. Still, unless we could have supposed it possible that he would insult, or in any way annoy the ladies, we could not with any propriety have gone on board. It was not till the evening that we heard anything about the matter; and then, to our surprise, we found that both Miss Avening and Miss Danvers were more inclined to regard him favourably than they had ever previously done. They said that he was so gentle, and respectful, and complimentary, and so disinterested in the motives which had induced him to seek their acquaintance, that their objections to him were so far removed, they had no longer any hesitation in accepting Lady Piony's invitation to join the pic-nic.

On a lovely morning nearly a dozen yachts, large and small, were sailing together up the Southampton Water towards the most picturesque spot on its banks, Netley Abbey, at that time a favourable resort of pleasure-seekers. We landed with our hampers, attended by our servants, and so did a few others, including the Danverses, but the great bulk of the provisions certainly came from the Phantom, with a large supply of wines of all sorts, and it soon became evident that Colonel O'Carroll was the hero of the day. He divided his attentions pretty evenly among several of the young ladies, but Miss Avening, to my surprise, received more than her fair share—indeed, far more than her

cousin the heiress. She, at the same time, appeared very indifferent to his attentions, nor did they in any way, as far as I could judge, excite Sir Griffith's jealousy. The pic-nic was like numberless others at which I have been present. We spread the tablecloths on the grass under the shade of the old walls, and cooled the wine in a fountain, and were far more amiable and familiar with each other than we should have been in a close dining-room, and toasts were drank, and some of the gentlemen sang songs, and two or three of the ladies, and at length it was announced that the tide was falling, and that, if we did not get away directly, the boats would be left high and dry, and so we hurried off and got on board the yachts, and sailed back with a very light breeze, and only just managed to reach Cowes by nightfall ; and so the long-talked-of pic-nic ended, as many others have, with no results worthy of record.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA.

PLEASANT days must end. The grand pic-nic had, as I have described, come off, and if not a failure, seemed to have afforded but little satisfaction to anybody. The season was advancing. The master of the Medora advised proceeding southward, we understood. We were on board her, taking a last sail down to the Needles, the Wave keeping company. Willoughby told Colonel Danvers that he also proposed making a cruise to the Mediterranean.

"Then we may hope sometimes to meet you," said Julia Danvers, with a slightly hightened colour.

"I would wish the Wave to hold the same position throughout the voyage that she does now," answered Willoughby, looking unutterable things. He had never before gone so far.

"Does Sir Griffith accompany you ?" she asked, without paying attention to his remark. "He appears to like yachting."

We were seated at the main skylight, while Edgell was standing near Fanny Avening, who was steering, and, I just then discovered, giving him instructions in the art.

"O yes, I have booked him and Frothyton," answered Willoughby. "I have great hopes that we shall make a yachtsman of him ; and as he is a confirmed bachelor, he couldn't employ his time in a better way."

Miss Danvers looked incredulous, and merely said, "Oh, is he?"

Sir Griffith might not have been a marrying man, but he certainly took no pains to impress his determination on Miss Avening, for he had eyes and ears only for her, and if she moved he was unconsciously immediately again by her side. My two friends found the sail a very pleasant one, and so did I, but not for the same reason. I returned on board the Wave under the firm conviction that if they made offers to the ladies to whom they had respectively been paying attention, they would be accepted.

The Wave was completely ready for sea, with the exception of a couple of brass guns, powder, and blue lights, and a few extra stores, which we went over to Portsmouth to procure. We were kept there a whole day longer than we had expected. The wind failed us on our return, and we were swept out towards St. Helen's, and night had set in when we got back to Cowes. We had to pick up a berth as we best could, and to wait for daylight to return to our old position near the Medora.

I heard my companions go on deck early in the morning, and soon after exclamations of surprise and vexation simultaneously escape their lips. The Medora had disappeared; so had the Phantom. We sent round to the yachts brought up near. No one could tell us anything of them. Colonel Danvers would surely have left some message at the club. I hurried on shore. There was not a word. The club signalman could only inform me that the Medora had sailed for the westward, and so had Colonel O'Carroll's new yacht. There was a dead calm and flood tide; we could not move.

I returned on board with the announcement, and after breakfast went again on shore, to get our letters and try for more information. Who should I meet but Lady Piony, with the six Miss Roseblossoms, starting on a morning walk. They instantly attacked me.

"So it's all settled," they exclaimed. "Sir Griffith is to marry Miss Avening, and your friend, Mr. Willoughby, the heiress, Miss Danvers. Well, some girls don't take long to enchain their swains, especially if they have sixty thousand charms or so."

I denied the impeachment on the part of my friends, and assured them that so little truth was there in the report, that we did not even know where the Medora had gone. They seemed rather pleased than otherwise at this. I had made my escape from them, when a pilot touched his hat, and producing a pink-coloured note, asked if I was Mr. Willoughby, of the Wave, as he promised to deliver it in person. Showing him the letters I had for Willoughby, I undertook to convey it, and with no small amount of curiosity hurried on board,

Willoughby eagerly took it, and read it over and over again.

"My dear fellow, I can't make it out," he exclaimed at length, handing the billet to me. "Can you?"

It ran :

"MY DEAR SIR,—I hate deception, and think it right to say that we are not exactly what we seem; yet I cannot believe that this will make any difference to you. Still, to prevent disappointment, I have resolved not further to encourage the flattering attentions you have of late paid me. I cannot pretend not to have perceived them, and wish to acknowledge them with gratitude.

"We shall have commenced our voyage before you receive this.

"Yours, most sincerely,

"JULIA DANVERS."

"A riddle, to be solved only by perseverance," I observed. "I should say, sail in chase, if you care for her."

"Yes, yes, by all means, Willoughby," cried Sir Griffith, eagerly. "Let us be after them."

"It is very trying, though," exclaimed Willoughby, who had been glancing over his letters, in a plaintive tone. "Here's an epistle from my mother, giving me her blessing and full permission to make an offer to Julia Danvers, and marry her, and now she shows she does not care a pin for me. Women don't——"

"Try her, my dear fellow," said I. "Show her that you care for her. Chase her across the ocean, as Nelson did Villeneuve, and then bring her to action. I'll back you to gain the victory. Now let's whistle for a wind."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PURSUIT OF THE FUGITIVES, AND THE ADVENTURES OF THE PURSUERS.

A BREEZE sprang up, and away sprang the Wave in chase of our sea-nymphs.

"The Medora must have put into Plymouth," cried Willoughby. "The ladies command the craft, and I don't think that they would be so cruel as to be off entirely, without a word more of farewell."

"I'm sure Fanny wouldn't," said the baronet to himself. "I never met a girl more ready to enjoy love in a cottage in the winter, and in the summer on board a cutter of fifty tons."

"Julia cannot mean that she is indifferent to me," murmured Willoughby.

I learned also from Willis that the master of the Medora had told him that he had left a chronometer and sextant at Plymouth, and that they should look in there to get them. Into Plymouth, therefore, we ran, hoping to meet the Medora coming out, but in no part of that extensive harbour was she to be found, nor could we hear that she had been there. We naturally, also, made inquiries for the Phantom, but neither could we hear anything of her, and I in my own mind of course associated her disappearance with that of the Medora. Somehow or other O'Carroll had found out that she was about to sail, and had got the start of us and followed her. I was still somewhat uncertain of Willoughby's chance of success. Without a moment's delay we made sail. There was one more chance : she might have put into Falmouth. For Falmouth we steered. But again we were doomed to disappointment. The Medora had not been there.

"Then she must have put into Penzance to get a supply of fresh meat, vegetables, and milk. Terrible ! they hadn't even a goat on board," exclaimed Willoughby, in a tone of commiseration at the hard fate of the fair voyagers.

Just, however, as we were about to haul round the Lizard, we fell in with the Nora, her owner, Lord Ballyshannon, whom I knew, being on board. He had been at anchor near the Medora, in Cowes Roads, for two or three days.

"Spoke her yesterday," he answered to my queries, "standing to the southward, that lovely young Hebe, Miss Avening, at the helm. By Jove, sir, if it were not for Lady Ballyshannon and a dozen young pledges, I'd be after that girl, and propose to her as soon as I caught her, in spite of her being as poor as a church mouse, as is reported."

I asked if he had seen the Phantom, remarking that I fancied O'Carroll was bound to the Mediterranean, but nothing had been seen of her, and I began to hope that, after all, our fair friends would escape the impudent adventurer altogether. I had gained important information, the Medora was ahead, and hurrying on board again we made all sail in chase. Few yachts have crossed the Bay of Biscay under a greater press of canvas than we carried ; our glasses being kept constantly pointed ahead, and on either bow, from sunrise to sunset. There could be little doubt how far gone the baronet was when he began to practice going aloft, and the afternoon of the second day found him seated on the cross-trees sweeping the horizon with his telescope. The Wave was fast, but so undoubtedly was the Medora ; we, however, trusted to carrying on far more than she was likely to do. Three days passed by, and we had not caught her up. We were getting well across the Bay, and ought soon to make the coast of Spain. Sir Griffith and

Willoughby were becoming uneasy; symptoms, loss of appetite, an anxious look of the eyes, the number of cigars smoked daily much increased.

"They will run down the coast close in shore for the sake of seeing it, and if so we shall surely fall in with them," observed Willoughby.

"May we not possibly have passed them?" said I.

"Is that possible? How dreadfully trying!" he exclaimed.

"Very probable, at all events," I answered, calmly. "They do not know that we are after them, and may have run into see St. Sebastian, or Corunna, both interesting places."

"To be sure, we ought to have run in there also," he and Sir Griffith exclaimed in the same breath.

"And most probably missed them," said I. "We may meet them at Lisbon, but are certain of hearing of them at Gibraltar, if they have gone through the Straits."

A stern chase is a long chase in war, and so it is in love. Whether those who guided the movements of the Medora were purposely flying from us we could not say, but day after day we were doomed to disappointment.

"They admire scenery—I am sure Fanny does," exclaimed the baronet. "They must have put into the Tagus."

"Of course, Julia was speaking to me about it," cried Willoughby.

"Unless they have been there before," I remarked. "I think that I heard Miss Danvers say that they were there last summer."

Willis corroborated this. A fresh trial was in store for us. When off the Douro, and in the very latitude where, supposing we had sailed nine knots and the Medora eight, we might have nearly come up with her, it fell a dead calm, and there we lay, rolling our burnished sides in the shining water, throwing up light showers of foam, which sparkled and glittered in the bright sun, while the land, fringed with black rocks and yellow sands, and covered with dark pine-groves, white houses, and ranges of blue hills beyond, lay glowing to the eastward.

"Trying, very trying," ejaculated my companions—and so it was, physically as well as morally, I suspected, to Sir Griffith—for few landsmen could have stood that lazy rolling in the Atlantic without feeling wretchedly uncomfortable, and I was more than ever convinced that his love was true, or he would have very speedily cried enough, and given up the chase. I am reminded of a romantic incident of my younger days, when youths and maidens married not for self, but from sympathy of heart and taste, and true love existed not only in

romances, but in reality. I was crossing the Channel in a public steamer from England to France, the sea was rough, the wind boisterous and foul, and the vessel tumbled, and pitched, and rolled about most unmercifully with regard to the comfort of the unfortunate people on board. Among the passengers was a young couple, who, it was evident from the costume of the lady and the devoted attention of the gentleman, were on their wedding tour. At first they seemed to enjoy themselves, and to be rather pleased with the appearance of the storm-tossed ocean, and for some time they stood watching the foam-covered waves, rising and falling between us and the horizon, and the sailing craft under snug canvas tossing on their summits as they struggled onward to some sheltering port. Gradually, however, the young lady subsided into a seat, and the gentleman brought her cloaks and rugs, and wrapped her up carefully and warmly, and then he got a plaid and put it over her head and threw it over his own, and the two sat under it so lovingly sheltered from the rude blast and the driving spray. I, as is my wont, kept walking the deck, passing them frequently. I observed that their countenances grew paler and paler—or, should I say, yellower and yellower—and then as I passed again I heard the young lady whisper in a soft voice, "Kiss me dearest, I am so sick," and he did most affectionately, and then he did what the strong-stomached stewardess often has to do, and he held her head so carefully, and then he kissed her again, and she looked up and said, "I am so much better now, dearest." Oh, that young man's love was true as gold, for he looked as affectionately on his bride as if she had been decked in her orange-wreath and silken robe, with sparkling eyes, and the rosy bloom of health on her cheeks.

Three days we lay broiling in the sun, for ten hours during each of them, and then a breeze sprang up, and away we bowled, not doing less than eight knots an hour till we came off Cadiz. We stood into the bay, and as quickly stood out again, for no Medora was to be seen.

Now came the exciting moment. Had she arrived at Gibraltar? If not, we must beat back, and perhaps miss her after all. What were all the luxuries on board to my two friends? They couldn't touch one of them. Not being in love, I cannot say that I allowed my appetite to be affected, but it was very exciting even to me as we stood in under the old rock looking out for the schooner. Yes—there were two schooner yachts. Our hearts beat high; then a groan escaped my friends' bosoms. Neither of them was the Medora; nor was the Phantom there either. We hurried on shore. The Medora had been

there, and so had the Phantom. The first had sailed by daybreak the previous morning, and the Phantom had got under weigh shortly afterwards, and had stood in the same direction. What were fresh vegetables, meat, or milk to us? We pulled back as if for life, and made all sail up the blue Mediterranean; but again the breeze was unfriendly, and refused to blow. Two days we were becalmed, and a cigar-box was emptied. Then the breeze came, and once more we pressed on. Sometimes we had light winds, sometimes calms, and our progress was very slow, or rather we made no progress at all.

Malta was our destination, should we not come up previously with the Medora. But unless she had found the same calms to which we had been subjected, it was possible that she might have got to that little military hothouse and been off again; for Malta in mid-winter is pleasant enough, but in the dog days, and for weeks after them, it is hot enough to satisfy a salamander. We had drifted to the southward; off the coast of Barbary. The high, misty, blue shore was in sight on the starboard bow, when Willis and several of the men declared they heard the sound of firing in the distance. From the deck we could see nothing, but on going aloft I made out with the glass the faint outline of a schooner close in with the shore, and I could not doubt that the firing proceeded from her. It had not before occurred to me that we were not far from the Riff district—a territory the inhabitants of which are the most determined pirates on the shores of the Mediterranean. My imagination is naturally vivid, and on this I began to fear that the schooner was the Medora, that she was attacked by these scoundrels, and that, unless she could hold out till we could reach her, all on board would be massacred or carried away into captivity. I sincerely hoped that my friends on deck would not think the same; for, till a breeze should get up, we could not go to their assistance. At first I thought of proposing to go in the boats, but with the limited crew we carried, only sufficient to work the vessel, I felt that we could do nothing against the large and strongly-armed boats of the Riffians. I therefore resolved not to breathe my suspicions, but to wait with what patience I could till a breeze should spring up to enable us to get nearer in shore. The fears of lovers are, however, easily excited. My countenance must have exhibited the anxiety I felt.

"What is the matter, my dear fellow?" exclaimed Willoughby, as soon as I reached the deck.

"Can it be the Medora?" cried Sir Griffith, grasping my arm.
"Speak, Frothyton! Tell me the worst."

"I hope not. I have no reason for supposing that the vessel inside

of us, from which the firing we have heard comes, is the Medora, more than any other schooner which happens to be in the Mediterranean at the present moment," I answered, with as indifferent a tone as I could command.

"Then she is a schooner," cried Willoughby, turning pale.

"We must go to their assistance. We may yet be in time to save them!" exclaimed Sir Griffith.

"Not a breath of wind to send us through the water, sir," observed Willis, who had also just been aloft. "Maybe she is the Medora, but as likely as not she's some other craft."

"On the mere possibility of her being the Medora, we must reach her," exclaimed Sir Griffith. "We must go in the boats. My dear Willoughby, you'll not hesitate, I'm sure."

"Certainly. It may be a hopeless case, but we'll go," said Willoughby. "We'll leave three men in the yacht; the rest will come with us. Willis, choose two men to remain with you. Lads, you'll all volunteer?"

"Ay, ay, sir—all—all!" shouted the crew, who had been gathering round to hear what was said.

Willis kept the old quartermaster, Sir Griffith's servant, and a boy; not a very good crew, but they could not be of much service to us. Five stout yachtsmen, well armed, manned each boat, besides ourselves. Willoughby and Sir Griffith went in one boat; I took command of the other.

"If we don't happen to come back, shape a course for Malta, and say why we went," whispered Willoughby to the master, as we went down the side. "If a breeze springs up, follows us."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Willis. "But, to my mind, she isn't the Medora, and it isn't worth while risking your lives for strangers."

There was not a moment to be lost. Away we pulled; the blue water hissed and bubbled under the bows as the boats clove their rapid way through it. As to fear, hazardous as was the undertaking, not one of us felt it. Our only thought was to be in time before the crew of the schooner was overpowered. We were very sure that the old colonel would hold out to the last, and inspirit all on board. We could soon hear the firing distinctly, and at length see the vessel herself which we supposed that the pirates were attacking. She was still holding out, that was one comfort. Not a man among us had ever been in a fight, and yet we were all as eager as old war-horses, and, under any other circumstances, we should have been sorry to find that we had no enemy with which to contend. I had a good telescope

by my side, that I might ascertain as soon as I could whether or not the schooner in sight was the Medora. I prayed that she was not. The firing ceased, the sails were lowered, and it seemed but too certain that the pirates had captured her. We must re-take her though ; no one had any doubt about that. In another ten minutes we had got a mile nearer. I stood up on the seat, and took a steady look at the schooner.

"She is a merchantman, and no yacht," I exclaimed—"a fruit vessel. They are fine craft, and are generally armed, for fear of the gentry about the Greek Islands." Still Sir Griffith and Willoughby would not believe me, and insisted on going on. "The pirates have her in their power, and are towing her in shore," I cried out. "Had they been the friends we supposed, we might have gone on to share their fate if we could not rescue them, but there seems to be near a dozen large boats near the schooner, and, as we cannot help her crew, our wisest plan will be to return to the Wave as soon as possible, lest any of those gentry should spy her out, and make an attempt to capture her. They row tremendously fast, remember."

Still so completely had my friends been impressed with the idea that the schooner in-shore was the Medora, that even now they could not be persuaded to the contrary. Of course I could not leave them, so, against my better judgment, we went on till we had got nearly a mile nearer, when I induced Willoughby to take the glass, and judge for himself. While he was standing up looking through it, he cried out :

"No, to be sure she isn't ; and, by Jove ! the villans have seen us, and are making chase."

Sure enough, so they were ; five or six large boats, any one of them more than a match for our two gigs. Round we pulled, and the men gave way with a will, for no one had a fancy for being knocked on the head, or carried away captive to Timbuctoo or elsewhere into the interior ; but the men were already tired with their long and rapid pull and the yacht's boats were built more to carry passengers and to swim in a heavy sea than for speed. The Riffians were fresh and came on very rapidly. The yacht was still a long way off, and it seemed very doubtful if we could keep ahead of them till we could reach her deck. Once there, in spite of odds, we might beat off the scoundrels.

"It will be an unpleasant termination to our cruise if they catch us," I thought to myself. "All owing to Willoughby's and Edgell's obstinacy. However, poor fellows, probably were I in their state, I should have done the same. That's what comes of being in love."

Of course, however, though our case might be desperate, every man of the party had resolved to fight to the last. As the Riff pirates became more and more certain of their prey, they seemed to double their efforts to overtake us. Now and then I turned my head over my shoulder to have a look at them, but still more anxiously did I watch the Wave. I thought that I was not mistaken. The gaff-topsail gave a flap; I knew it by the change of light on the sail. It had been in the shade, and was not visible, when a bright gleam of sunshine on it made it for an instant stand out like a flake of snow against the sky. Again it disappeared, once more to stand out for a greater length of time than before. The jib, too, shortly after filled. The Wave was moving. Willis must have seen the boats in chase. He was not a man to desert his friends. I shouted to my companions. There was no doubt of it—the cutter was standing towards us. The breeze increased. Faster and faster she flew. The pirates had got disagreeably near us. Our men redoubled their efforts to escape, the Riffians to overtake us. It was still a question whether we should reach the cutter before they did so. They began to fire, but their bullets fell short of us. The tidy Wave walked the water, not only like a thing of life, but as if she knew that she was very much wanted.

"Hurrah! the breeze is strengthening," I shouted, to encourage the men. Not that they wanted encouragement; yachtsmen will be found on all occasions fully equal to men-of-war's men, if not spoilt by their employers.

We met the cutter; she rounded to; we sprang on board; the boats were hoisted in. Again we filled.

"We must make a running fight of it," cried Willoughby. "Give the rascals a shot, to show that we have teeth."

The old quartermaster had got the four brass guns loaded. They were of no great calibre, and we had not many shot for them. We fired a broadside, consisting of two guns, and then ran the other two aft, and, keeping away rather more, fired them, pitching the shot right in among the Riff boats.

"Bravo!—capital shots!" cried Willoughby.

Sir Griffith had fired one of them, I the other. The baronet became quite excited:

"Quick with the powder, lads!" he shouted, sponging out the gun. "The shot now! That's it! Hurrah! I've hit again! The powder, boys! Be smart, now! If they come nearer, we'll give them language!"

We were all pretty well occupied with loading and firing, for, by

training the broadside guns aft, we could bring them to bear on the enemy. Still they pursued, but, as they got nearer, our shots told with more deadly effect, and at length, apparently, they came to the conclusion that if we were so difficult to deal with at a distance, we should be still tougher subjects at close quarters, and so, putting up their helms, they ran back towards the coast.

"That firing is exciting work, and rather dirty!" cried Sir Griffith. "Steward, bring me some hot water and a towel. My hands are positively black, and so is my face, I conclude, yet I prefer it to partridge-shooting."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH, AFTER THEY HAVE UNDERGONE NUMBERLESS TRIALS AND ADVENTURES, AMPLE JUSTICE IS DONE TO ALL PARTIES.

"THAT was a touch-and-go affair with those Riff chaps, sir," observed Willis to me, the day after the adventure I have just described. "If they had caught us in a calm, I doubt but what they'd have given us a very tough job to beat 'em off, and yet I'd not have missed it for anything, just to see the way Sir Griffith and Mr. Willoughby worked the guns. It's not the first time that I've seen one of those kid glove-wearing scent-bottle gentlemen show that they'd got the right stuff in them. I mind when I was in the navy one of our lieutenants used to come on deck every morning in kid gloves. Some said he'd a new pair every week. And his handkerchief! my eyes, you could scent him from one end of the deck to the other. He was a pretty smart officer, there was very little soft sawder comed out of his mouth; but the men thought very little of him till one night, when a heavy sea was running, a boy fell overboard, and would, as sure as fate, have been drowned, when the lieutenant, without stopping to pull off his coat, jumped overboard, and towing the life buoy up to him kept him afloat till a boat was lowered to pick them both up. I mind that the boat was pretty near swamped when getting on board again."

I heartily agreed with Willis in his remarks on Edgell, but of course I knew that his object in touching on this subject was to obtain some information, or to impart some to me. I found that in reality he wished to ascertain whether we should take the trouble, when we got to Malta, to have a man-of-war sent to rescue the poor fellows who might have

been taken prisoners by the Riffians, had any on board the unfortunate schooner escaped with their lives. I assured him that we should lose no time, after our arrival at Malta, in reporting what had occurred, should we not previously fall in with a man-of-war. Not two hours after that a sail hove in sight, which proved to be a sloop-of-war, the captain of which insisted that we should go back and assist in discovering the perpetrators of the outrage, before all trace of the schooner had been destroyed. When dealing with barbarians, prompt action is most important.

Eager as Willoughby and Sir Griffith were to overtake the Medora, they could not resist the captain's appeal. There being a good breeze, the next morning by daybreak we were close in with the very spot where we had last seen the unfortunate schooner. We ran in with the corvette, which stood on as long as the depth of water would allow her, and then anchored with a spring on her cable, which enabled her to bring her broadside to bear on the shore. Not a trace of the schooner was to be seen, but on one side there were some rocks, which ran out from a high promontory, and behind this it appeared that there might be a harbour to shelter her, as well as the pirate boats which had attacked us. To make a long story short, the captain sent a boat on shore with an Arabic interpreter he had with him, and a flag of truce, to the largest house we could see, saying that if the schooner and all the people captured in her were not given up within a couple of hours, he would knock every house he could see to pieces. The house belonged to the chief of the district, and, as he had probably secured his share of the plunder, he magnanimously promised that the vessel, which was of little use to them, and the crew, and such parts of the cargo as could be found, should be restored. Within the time stipulated the schooner, with a third of her cargo and her crew, except two men who had been killed, were brought out to us. The captain then demanded that the perpetrators of the outrage should be given up, and in a couple of hours more six poor wretches were brought on board, who, of course, protested that they had nothing to do with the affair. I believe that for once in their lives, at all events, they spoke the truth. However, the insult to the flag of England having been thus avenged, the corvette, with the recovered schooner and the prisoners, sailed back to Gibraltar.

I recount the adventure to show the effect which speedy and armed expostulation produces on uncivilised, and often on civilised, persons. My friends had reason to regret the delay to which we were subjected. On our arrival at Malta we found that the Medora had been there, that

the Phantom came in soon afterwards, that the Medora had then sailed for Naples, and that the Phantom had immediately followed her. I gained this information on shore, and brought it off to my friends on board. Neither Edgell nor Willoughby spoke a word on receiving it.

"The impudent scoundrel! What does he mean?" cried Willoughby, at length.

"Fanny must be dreadfully annoyed with his persecuting attentions," said the baronet to himself. "I wish that we had married, and she had been saved all this. What can we do?"

"Up anchor and be after them," I remarked. "We must catch them up before long, if we keep going."

"But suppose they have left Naples when we arrive there? In what direction are we then to steer?" said Willoughby, almost in despair. Having been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or more poetically being a child of fortune, he had not been accustomed to be thwarted or disappointed.

"I say as before, my dear fellow, follow them round the world," cried Sir Griffith. "Or rather among the Greek islands, for they talked of visiting them the next time they were in the Mediterranean. We shall be sure to catch them at last. But my hope is, that when they get to Naples they will stay there some time. There is so much to see, and I know that they have never been there before."

Running out of the picturesque harbour of Valetta, we accordingly shaped a course for Naples. Again we were doomed to a trial of our patience. Scarcely were we out of sight of Malta when it fell calm, and three days passed before we sighted Sicily. We got heartily sick of the very sight of Etna, as it towered upward above the intervening land. We managed to creep on through the Straits of Messina, till we got sent over from the rocks of Scylla towards the whirlpool Charybdis and back again more than once before a breeze sprang up and carried us through them, but only again to be becalmed off Stromboli, which for our edification and amusement exhibited its fireworks for the whole of the night we remained in sight of it.

At length we were off Naples by our reckoning, but a thick fog veiled its beauties from our sight. We stood on under easy sail, with the lead going, feeling our way in; very deep water I remember. Suddenly the mist lifted, as a curtain rises in a theatre, or as a scene is made to roll away that another may appear beyond, and before our eyes appeared a landscape such as I have never seen surpassed in beauty. Before us the deep blue sea, sprinkled over with the snowy canvas of innumerable vessels and boats gliding here and there, of various rigs, the graceful

latine far outnumbering the others. On the one side was the rock-crowned isle of Ischia, on the other the green and vine-clad Capri. Before us Naples, its citidal and palaces glittering in sunshine, the white houses of Portici stretching round the bay, and Vesuvius rising on the right, with its slopes covered with bright green, Pompeii at its base, and capped just then with a cloud of smoke, betokening the raging fire within. But I confess that I do not believe my friends thought anything of the scene. Their glasses were directed round the bay in search of the schooner yacht we had so long chased, or turned towards the Mole, within which they hoped to see her. The breeze was far too gentle for their impatience. We ran in till we got near enough to bring up, and then all three of us pulled in towards the harbour. Among the crowd of masts we hoped to distinguish those of the Medora. Sir Griffith and Willoughby stood up, eagerly glancing here and there, but in vain. Neither of the schooners we looked for were to be seen.

We landed, and inquired our way to the office of the consul. He was away, but the vice-consul would be forthcoming, we were told, if sent for. We begged that he might be summoned. He came. When we spoke of Colonel Danvers he put on a long face, and said that strange stories had been current about him. Among others, that he was supposed to have come with revolutionary projects, that persons known to be disaffected to the government, that of the most paternal one of the good King Bomba, who at that period afforded the Neapolitans the happiness of reigning over them, had visited his vessel. Certain it was that he was one day set on when on shore, in the company of two ladies, by an armed band, who would probably have killed him had it not been for the active interference of an Irish gentleman who had come in another yacht, and who with his boat's crew rescued him and got him and the ladies safely off on board. Colonel Danvers had demanded justice, but as that was an article rather difficult to obtain just then in Naples, he was at length persuaded to solve all difficulties by going away.

"The scoundrel!" cried Sir Griffith, when he had heard thus far of the consul's narrative. "I feel sure that he invented the stories, and set them about himself; and I have no doubt that he bribed some fellows to attack him and the ladies, that he might gain the honour of rescuing them."

"Honour! a term not particularly applicable in connection with such a rascal," I could not help saying. "I have no doubt that you are right in your surmises, Edgell."

"An extraordinary way of speaking of a gentleman of wealth and

ancient lineage," observed the vice-consul. "Why, I advanced him five hundred pounds, which he required to pay his crew, and other trifling expenses. He had borrowed a few hundreds besides from some other merchants before he found out that I could help him, or he would have honoured me with the whole sum."

"That is more than he will do with regard to the bill he drew, when it becomes due," I observed, drawing the vice-consul aside. "I should advise you to try and prove a case of swindling against him, and you may catch him before he gets through the Straits."

The poor gentleman was now as ready to abuse Colonel O'Carroll as he was before to praise him, and to give me all the information we required. The Medora was bound for Athens, and of course the Phantom would pursue her there, that her owner might carry on the same tricks he had played at Naples.

Once more we were on board, and standing out of the lovely bay to which we had paid so limited a visit, though what was the most enchanting scenery just then to the two lovers! We prayed that we might have a favourable breeze and clear weather, that we might carry on night and day till we could overtake the Medora.

We had a fair breeze and fine weather till we had left Cape Spartivento astorn, and then our former ill luck returned, and for nearly four hours of wind, and then not much of it, we had twenty of calm. What little wind there was generally came from the eastward, and in our teeth. Consequently, when there at length came a breeze, Willoughby ordered all sail to be made, and vowed that he would crack on as long as a stick would stand to carry canvas. So we did, and the beautiful Wave went staggering on across the mouth of the blue Adriatic in a way which would have astonished Pater *Aeneas*, and many other nautical heroes of even later date. Then again came a calm—such a calm as is not often found in northern climes: the air and water had both, it seemed, gone to sleep, and the only element awake and in full power was fire, or rather the sun, which beat down with fury on our heads, blistered the paint, and made the pitch, where any was to be found, hiss and bubble as if it were boiling. This continued for some time. We were not the only vessels within the circle of the calm, for in the far distance two sails had been seen since daybreak, both with very white canvas, but so far off that we could not make out what they were to a certainty, though the general opinion was that they were schooners. Of course Edgell and Willoughby insisted that one of them was the Medora, but as there are numerous vessels of that rig in those seas, I was not so convinced of the fact as they were. Though

becalmed, we had every stitch of canvas set, in the hopes that a breath of air might come, and enable us to get up near enough to the strangers to ascertain what they were. My friends were forward, with their glasses, endeavouring to make out the rig of the vessels to the eastward.

"Mr. Frothyton, sir," said Willis, coming up to me, "you know these seas as well as I do; but you'll excuse me, sir, Mr. Willoughby and Sir Griffith want to keep all this canvas aloft, when it ought to be safely stowed. There was just such a sky as this when the Algerine brig-of-war was lost. I was a lad then, aboard the old Revenge, when we was hove on our beam-ends, and pretty well nigh lost too."

"They are schooners, and one of them must be her," cried Sir Griffith, he and Willoughby exchanging congratulatory looks.

"Whether it is her or not, if we don't be sharp and shorten sail we shan't be in no condition to help her or ourselves, gentlemen," cried Willis, unusually excited. "All hands shorten sail!"

I seconded him in spite of the expostulations of my friends. The crew flew to their stations, and rapidly every stitch of canvas was lowered, and the topmast struck and housed. Scarcely was the last rope belayed than Sir Griffith, whose eye had never been off the schooners, with a groan of horror cried out that one of them had disappeared, and the words were scarcely out of his lips than a loud roar, or rather a shriek and a hissing was heard, and then the spoon-drift came flying over us, and down on her beam-ends went the Wave, as if never to rise again; but quickly righting, and feeling the helm off she flew before the gale.

"Stop her! stop her!" cried Sir Griffith. "Why can't you stop the yacht. I am certain I saw some dark object where one of the vessels was."

Under other circumstances we might have laughed at his vehement exclamation. Happily the storm soon passed over, and we beat back to where we had seen the schooner. Sure enough there floated a vessel dismasted. We neared her. Even Willis acknowledged that she might be the Medora shorn of her beauty. Two female forms stood on her deck watching our approach. I might have said three, only two were more prominent, and there was an old gentleman.

"Thank Heaven they have escaped!" exclaimed the baronet and Willoughby.

"Polly's all right. Well, I am glad!" said Willis to himself. The skipper, who was a bachelor, spoke of the lady's-maid.

We were soon on board. I need scarcely describe the reception

my two friends met with; indeed, I was so busy shaking hands with the colonel that I did not at the moment observe them. He told me that his daughter and niece had acted like heroines throughout the squall, and that although there appeared every probability of the Medora being lost, they had not for a moment given way to fear.

"But we saw too schooners," I remarked. "What was the other?"

"The Phantom," answered the colonel. "She was about two miles off when the squall struck us, and after it had cleared off she was nowhere to be seen. When you first hove in sight, in truth, we fancied that she was returning, having run off before the gale, and it was a great relief to my mind when we recognised the Wave. The fact is, that Colonel O'Carroll has rendered us so many essential services, that though I could never get over my prejudice against him, I could scarcely prohibit him from visiting on board, though he almost persecuted us with his attentions."

I of course then told the colonel of all I knew of the man, and of what we had heard at Naples.

"I am not surprised at what you tell me," he answered. "And, though you have come to our aid at a most important moment, the action would have been more dramatic had the villain of the piece been on the point of marrying my niece or my daughter, or both of them." And the old colonel laughed heartily at his conceit, little thinking at the moment of the real state of the case.

The ladies, with their attendant, Polly, and the colonel, now came on board the Wave, which took the schooner in tow, while our united crews set to work to get up jury-masts and put her in order. Meantime, while I stood at the helm, I could not help hearing a conversation which took place.

"My sweet Julia, I have been utterly miserable for the last two months. I had just got my mother's sanction to offer you my hand and heart, when you so unaccountably disappeared," whispered Willoughby. "I love you for yourself alone, and the large fortune you are said to possess weighs not a feather in the balance. Had you not a sixpence I should be as eager to win your affections—I shall be miserable without you."

"If that is the case, my hand shall be yours, as my heart, I assure you, is," answered the heiress, smiling sweetly. "But there is still a mystery which I cannot clear up."

Meantime, Sir Griffith had taken Fanny Avening aside, and told her of the wretched anxiety he had gone through, confessed his poverty,

and talked of the selfishness which induced him to speak, and which only his ardent love would excuse, but vowed that his life should be devoted to her if she would consent to enjoy love in a cottage. The sparkling gentle expression of her eye showed that she had no potent objection to offer.

"Only," she added, "there is a mystery which I must clear up. My cousin Julia and I have, at my earnest wish, changed places, and I think, as it has turned out, to our mutual advantage. She has won a man who loves her, I feel sure, for herself, and has an ample fortune for her support; I, too, have won a man who loves me for myself, of that I am sure" (and she tenderly pressed Sir Griffith's hand), "and would be, I am equally sure, willing to share it with me in a cottage; but, though love in a cottage may be a very romantic and pleasant style of existence, I hope that he has no insuperable objection to the enjoyment of a fine yacht in summer, a country house in winter, and a town one in spring; for the fact of the case is, my dear Sir Griffith, that while you thought that you were running after a penniless girl, for whose support you were nobly ready to exert yourself, you were, in reality, chasing what you have gallantly won—an heiress!"

My tale must at length terminate. The villain of the piece was never again seen. We heard when at Athens that a boat was shortly afterwards picked up by a man-of-war at sea with the remnant of the Phantom's crew, that schooner, with owner and the rest of her people on board, having gone down in the squall which so nearly proved fatal to the Medora. Thus, not only the unfortunate builder, but the Jew at Portsmouth lost his money.

THE SIX YACHTSMEN,

AND HOW IT FARED WITH THEM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES SOME NAUTICAL HEROES AND MARINE HEROINES.

THE platform of the Waterloo Bridge Railway Station presented a scene of considerable animation and excitement. A train was on the point of starting. Gentlemen, with railway ticket and gloves and purse clutched in one hand, and carpet-bag and cloak and umbrella in the other, with a parcel or two under their arms, were hurring in, eagerly searching for their luggage, from which they had been unwillingly separated ; ladies, trailing shawls or hugging poodles, or frantically looking out for lost friends, were rushing about ; porters, shouting "By your leave," with trucksful of trunks and portmanteaus, were moving towards the luggage van ; and policemen, and ticket-takers, and lamplighters, and wheel-greasers, and passengers of every rank and age, and every variety of costume, were to be seen—soldiers, and sailors, and ploughboys, all more or less active and eager, as if something very important was about to take place. Amid all the excitement and bustle, which has been but partially described, a young man of slight, small figure and military air, with a light thin moustache on his lip, and a well-bronzed countenance which showed that he was no carpet knight, was walking deliberately along the platform.

"Hillo, Charley—hillo, Charley Chesterton, where are you bound for scudding along at such a rate ?" he suddenly exclaimed, his nonchalant air vanishing in a moment, as a broad-shouldered man with a well-knit figure, a fine open expression of countenance, and thoroughly gentlemanly in appearance, was hurrying along past him.

"What, Peppercorne ! Ned Peppercorne, I am delighted to see you ! I am bound for Southampton. Where are you going ?"

"To the same place," said Peppercorne.

"All right, then, answered Chesterton. "Secure a couple of seats. We'll spin our yarns then. I have some things to look after, and will be with you in a minute."

The friends were soon seated *vis-a-vis* to each other, and rattling southward at the rate of forty miles an hour.

"And what takes you down this way?" asked Peppercorne, after they had exchanged accounts of their late movements. "Love or matrimony, eh? Not going to sea again, I hope?"

"As to matrimony, that is in prospect; but I propose going to sea, though in a craft of my own, and I don't mind telling an old friend like you I am in love—desperately in love—with a charming girl. Couldn't help it—met her at a flower-show—was asked to take charge of her—lost our way—couldn't find our friends—spent the whole day in her company; it was all up with me before evening."

"What a misfortune!" drawled out Peppercorne, twirling his moustache. He was, by-the-by, a captain of heavy dragoons—one who made the charge at Balaklava, and had fought in a dozen pitched battles besides. "What a misfortune! Love among the roses, eh? Never thought of that sort of thing before: I'll go to a flower-show some day. Do gentleman always lose themselves with the ladies put under their charge?"

"Not of necessity. It depends much on the age, amiability, good looks, and willingness of the lady, I should think," answered Chesterton, gravely, thinking probably of something else.

"I shall try it some day, though, if the lady is all that is desirable," said Captain Peppercorne. "Well, did you leave your charmer in the garden among the roses, or what became of her?"

"You shall hear," answered Chesterton. "Just as I was considering the propriety of chartering a cab, and taking her home, who should we meet but a fine old gentleman accompanied by four young ladies, with two or three men dangling after them. My charmer—I haven't told you her name, it is Fanny—no sooner did she see the old gentleman, than, drawing her arm from mine, she ran up to him, and, having exchanged a few words, took me up and introduced me to her father, Sir Paul Pendergrast, and to her sisters, and to whom else do you think?—why, to Gilbert Halliday, whom we used to think such an old fogo. He has come into a large fortune, and is wonderfully brushed up. The old gentleman—not Gilbert, but Sir Paul—was very polite, thanked me for the care I had taken of his daughter Fanny, and invited me to dine with him the next day in Gloucester Place. I went;

everything substantial and in good style; no pretence about fashion. Heard Fanny sing; thought her more lovely in an evening dress than in morning costume; was more smitten than ever. I went to the opera, and exhibitions, and more flower-shows with her and her sisters, Sir Paul always going too. I like him for that; keeps a sharp eye over his daughters, and still gives them liberty enough. I was evidently growing in his good graces, and at length, when he found that I was not only a naval officer but a yachtsman, he told me that he proposed yachting this year, in consequence of the wishes of his daughters, that White was building him a fine brig at Cowes, that he knew very little about the matter, and that he should feel deeply obliged if I would superintend her fitting out, and find a master and crew for her. Of course I accepted the charge, for how could I, when looking at Fanny, refuse? I also bought a new vessel last year, a schooner the *Maid of Saragossa* (what do you think of her name?), and as I was going down to fit her out, I could look after his brig at the same time."

"Very curious. I have just bought a yacht, a fine wholesome-looking craft, a yawl," said Peppercorne. "I've knocked about a good deal already, and have learned to value comfort, and so had no fancy for a mere racing vessel. As she is fitted out and ready for sea, I ordered her up to Southampton, so that we can go on board at once, and I will take you over to Cowes. I do not wish to go any distance for some days to come, so you must take up your quarters on board while you superintend the fitting out your own and the baronet's yacht."

"That will just suit me," answered Chesterton. The friends, who had been schoolfellows, and had lived in camp and been under fire together, knew each other too well to throw away any superfluous compliments or expression of thanks. "I say, old fellow, I hope, too, that you'll admire the Pendergrasts as much as I do. You'll have opportunities of seeing them, and really they are—However, I will not say more about them, or you may be disappointed."

Captain Peppercorne twirled his moustache and smiled—a practice habitual with him to conceal his feelings whenever he was more than usually interested. He was, in reality, an impulsive, warm-hearted, enthusiastic fellow, but, as his impulsiveness had more than once in his younger days brought him into trouble, he endeavoured to conceal it under the supercilious, indifferent air of a cold-blooded man of the world. Chesterton well knew that this air was only assumed, and, though it would have been against his own nature even to

have assumed it, there were few people he liked better than Ned Peppercorne.

"Whatever people may say of the good old days gone by, or the middle ages, or the dark ages, or golden age of the world, I am thankful that I live in an age of railways and steamers, printing-presses, and yachts," exclaimed Chesterton, as the train, nearing the Southampton station, began to slacken its speed. "We live twice as long as our ancestors, calculating what we can do in a lifetime, see twice as much, and——"

"And are cleaner and more healthy, certainly," put in Peppercorne. "They must have been desperately dirty fellows in their habits, those great-grandpas of ours; and though honest, enlightened men shone out from among them, the mass were sadly ignorant and superstitious."

"Granted; but when I see the arrant nonsense believed in at the present day, I am out of conceit with the wisdom and enlightenment of our generation," exclaimed Chesterton. "I thought that fashionable folly had reached a climax when people put faith in table-rapping and spiritualism, but it has gone far beyond that. There are a set of fellows who have got more Greek and Latin into their skulls than common sense, who have taken to rigging out our churches with flowers, and pictures, and banners, and candlesticks, and altars with all sorts of gewgaws on them, till the whole place looks more like a temple of Flora or Diana than a decent English church, and they themselves decked in scarlet robes with tinsel and gold, marching through the building in procession, with other half-witted fellows, prostrating themselves like Japanese before the throne of their emperor, and sniffing up complacently the clouds of smoke rising out of censers swung backwards and forwards by wretched little boys whom they designate acolytes. Then they elevate the host, and their dupes bow down and worship it."

"My dear fellow, you don't mean to say that these sort of things take place in Protestant churches in England?" exclaimed Peppercorne, in a more serious tone than he had hitherto used. "You are talking of Roman Catholics!"

"Not a bit of it. I am talking of English churches. There are nearly two hundred in different parts of the country where these sort of things are practised, and it is said that there are upwards of one thousand English clergymen who advocate them," answered Chesterton. "A little cousin of mine asked me to take charge of her to one of them last Sunday, and who should brush close to me but an old schoolfellow—Bobby Diddle we used to call him—rigged out as I have

described, with a lot of other fellows chanting at the top of their voices, one holding up a cross, others banners, and others swinging censers. I was sorely tempted to sing out, ‘Oh, Bobby! you arrant little humbug.’ But I did not, and with equal self-restraint I sat out the whole of the blasphemous ceremony; but I made a vow never to enter one of them again, not even if Fanny was to declare that she would marry me nowhere else.”

“ You are right. I should expect very little domestic bliss if my wife was a slave to such follies,” said Captain Peppercorne. “ Bah! it makes me sick to think of such things, and heartily ashamed of my countrywomen. Don’t let’s talk more of it. Here we are at the docks. I ordered my boat to be in waiting.”

The two friends were soon seated in the stern-sheets of a four-oared gig, skimming swiftly over the smooth surface of the Southampton Water towards Captain Peppercorne’s yawl.

“ She is called the Cleopatra, and I rather like the name,” he observed. “ At all events, the luxurious Queen of Egypt is the first yachting lady one reads of, though I doubt if her barge, with all its gilding and silken hangings, was half as comfortable as my craft, and would have certainly made but a poor figure in a sea way.”

The Cleopatra herself was full worthy of all her owner’s eulogiums. She was a most luxurious craft, and Chesterton, having pulled round her, gave it as his decided opinion that she would prove a good sea boat, and be very fast.

The commencement of the yachting season is like the early days of manhood—the bright future, with its promises of enjoyment and amusement, lies before one; all is fresh and new; the end seems far, far off. No bills are coming in; pleasant acquaintances are to be made, interesting places to be visited, adventures gone through. It would be folly to be troubled by thoughts of the winding up of the season. Chesterton and Peppercorne agreed that they amazingly enjoyed finding themselves once more on salt water, standing across the Solent; and had not Charley been rather anxious to dine with the Pendergrasts, they would have run down to the Needles. The Cleopatra brought up as close into Cowes as she could, and Charley pointed out the house at which his friends, the Pendergrasts, were residing—a comfortable-looking mansion a little out of the town.

“ I say, Chesterton, who are the Pendergrasts? ” asked Captain Peppercorne, suddenly, as if the idea had occurred to him that he had never before heard of them.

“ The Pendergrasts are—the Pendergrasts, and Sir Paul is a baronet;

so don't ask questions," answered Chesterton, with a laugh. "He is a very good fellow, let me assure you. His daughters are everything that can be desired, and he gives each of them from thirty to forty thousand pounds, with more in prospect."

"A most satisfactory account of the family, and I shall have no objection to find my feet under his mahogany to-day," said Peppercorne, giving a finishing twist to his moustache.

As it was not far off the hour of dinner, the friends went on shore prepared to stay. There were signs of movement in the place. Three or four yachts already lay at anchor in the Roads, and several were fitting out up the harbour. As they walked up to the house, Peppercorne tried to pump his friend to ascertain more about the Pendergrasts, but not a word of further information could he get.

"You shall see—you shall see," was all Charley would say.

They were shown into the drawing-room. In it were three fair blooming young ladies, all pretty, who received Charley most cordially, but the captain of dragoons could not discover by his friend's manner if Fanny was amongst them.

"If they have a fault, it is being somewhat fat, and yet it is a fault on the right side," he said to himself, as he surveyed them for a few seconds before being duly presented.

They were lively and evidently good natured, at all events, by the friendly unaffected greeting they gave him. He had not an opportunity of saying much before Sir Paul himself came in—a stout, florid-complexioned old gentleman, with white hair.

"Glad to see you, Captain Peppercorne," said the baronet, as soon as he had been introduced. "You'll stop to dinner, of course. A knife and fork every day while you remain here—no formality—come in your yachting rig, if it suits you."

While Sir Paul was speaking the door opened, and a fourth young lady entered the room. She was slighter than the rest, and a little shorter. Ned thought her much prettier, and was quite prepared to find that she was the Fanny spoken of by his friend.

"My daughter Emily—my youngest daughter," said Sir Paul, introducing him.

Emily smiled very sweetly, and Ned felt that he might as well knock under at once. He then and there resolved to follow his friend's advice; whether or not the reported thirty thousand pounds had anything to do with it, he could not tell. While talking to her he came to the conclusion that the youngest of the three graces they had found in the room was Fanny—by the way, Charley contrived to draw her up to

the window to look at the Cleopatra, which was to be seen from it. She came fully under the description of a jolly girl, yet she was far from unrefined—Ned of course thought her in point of beauty inferior to Emily.

The eldest of Sir Paul's fair daughters, Jane, was the last to enter the room. She was a fine-looking girl—assumed the character of a strong-minded woman, by which she claimed authority to say and do exactly what she pleased; and very funny things she did say and do. The other two young ladies were, Ned discovered, called respectively Polly and Carry. Dinner was announced—no other gentleman appeared, but several were spoken of, especially a certain Mr. Dan O'Dowdy, the owner of a lugger, the Fair Imogene, and with no very great respect. When disparaging remarks were made about him, Polly always bristled up and undertook his defence. Another gentleman was mentioned, Mr. Gilbert Halliday, who was expected round from London in his steam yacht, the Aspasia. Peppercorne thought that Jane, the eldest daughter, seemed to take more interest in him than did the rest of the family, who spoke of him as a slow coach, an old fogo, an antiquated beau. The jolly Jane took the remarks with perfect good nature.

" You may say what you like of Mr. Halliday," she answered, intending to turn the tables on her sisters, " but, in my opinion, a staid, middle-aged husband is much more desirable than a harum-scarum lover, ' who laughs and rides away ; ' and I am sure that Mr. Halliday is a man who would never pay attentions to a lady unless he purposed to follow them up."

It was evident that three of the sisters had admirers. Emily or Carry might or might not have them, though he thought them the two prettiest of the set, and of those two, the longer he was in their society, he considered Emily the most attractive. He could not help seeing that the baronet was not first chop; but then he was hospitable and good-natured, and those qualities would cover a number of deficiencies in manner and breeding.

" He is a baronet, at all events, whatever he may have been, and each daughter has thirty thousand pounds," thought Ned to himself, each time that his aristocratic predilections began to assert their usual sway.

Sir Paul announced that the yacht would be ready for launching the next afternoon at about three o'clock, when the tide was suitable for the purpose.

" Well, Ned, what do you think of them ? " asked Chesterton, as the two friends walked down to their boat.

" You did not over praise them. I shall certainly go in for Emily," was the answer.

" Do, that is a good fellow, and keep me in countenance," said Chesterton.

C H A P T E R II.

THE LAUNCH.

A large and gay party were assembled in White's Yard at Cowes to witness the launch of the Diana. She was a fine-looking brig, fit to go round the world, or to accommodate a stout elderly gentleman accustomed to the luxuries of a good house, and his five by no means slight daughters.

Chesterton's schooner, the Maid of Saragossa, had been brought up close to the yard, and a handsome luncheon had been provided by him on board, to which the guests did ample justice. The new brig herself presented a gay appearance, with flags flying from every part of her. She had been advanced as much as she could be on shore, so that she might be got ready for sea in a few days. The young ladies drew lots who should name her. A good deal seemed to be depending on the result. The lot fell to Fanny.

" Then you'll be the first——" whispered one of her sisters to her. The rest of the sentence was not heard.

While the preparations were going on, a lugger, with an Irish Yacht Club burgee flying at her mast head, was seen gliding up the harbour with the tide. Exclamations, demonstrative of annoyance, broke from the sweet lips of several of the Miss Pendergrasts.

" Oh, it is the O'Dowd, to a certainty!" exclaimed Jane. " He spoils everything."

" Horrid!" said Emily. " If he comes here, we must get rid of him."

" Detestable with his brogue, and his boasting, and his blarney!" cried Carry. " Cannot papa tell him to go away?"

" No, I don't see that he is detestable at all!" exclaimed Polly, coming to the rescue of the much-abused Hibernian. " His brogue is natural to him, and it is very pretty. I believe that he has done everything he talks of; and as to his blarney, he only just pays a few more compliments than do stupid Englishmen, and he is just as sincere. I for one won't have him ill-spoken of; he doesn't deserve it."

This was a little side play, which the rest of the guests were not intended to hear, though some of them probably did.

The O'Dowd, as he was frequently called, must have known what was going on, for he brought up close to the Maid of Saragossa, and was very soon on board her. He was a broad-shouldered man, with a dash of red in his hair and a freckled countenance, a twinkle in his eye and a slight turn upward of the tip of his nose—not, however, an ill-looking or ill-built man by any means; indeed, many dowagers considered him a perfect Adonis. Chesterton, who guessed who he was as he pulled alongside, though he had never before seen him, was on the point of going to the gangway to welcome him, but Fanny begged him to keep back.

"He'll take care of himself, and we don't want to encourage him," she whispered.

The O'Dowdy soon made his way up to the baronet, whose hand he cordially shook.

"Delighted to see you, my dear Sir Paul. Looking as hale and hearty as ever. Pleasant occasion—a yacht of your own—very superior to a hired vessel—a fine brig she is, too—you are a happy man with such a craft and such daughters. I must go and pay my respects to the young ladies. They don't seem to recognise me."

Although her sisters would not look up, or kept their heads turned away when O'Dowdy approached, Polly immediately put out her hand with a smile to welcome him. Whatever had been his thoughts before, Dan O'Dowdy knew enough of women-kind to feel sure that of the Miss Pengergrasts Polly was the one he was most likely to win. He therefore troubled himself very little about her sisters; got her to point out Chesterton to him, ask Sir Paul to introduce him, and soon made himself as perfectly at home as if he had been one of the invited guests.

Luncheon took place before the launch. It was a very merry one, and of course success was drunk to the new yacht Diana. Everybody got into the highest spirits, and the other Miss Pengergrasts began to look with more complacency than heretofore on even the O'Dowd. Sir Paul was in his glory; the wine got into his head, and he talked big of his nautical knowledge and nautical achievements. He had been in his younger days a voyage as supercargo of a trader to the South Seas, and had picked up a knowledge of navigation and seamanship sufficient to enable him to command a British fleet.

"Gentlemen and ladies," he exclaimed, as he stood up to return thanks, when success to the Diana was drunk, "I am grateful for the honour you have done me and my craft, and for the interest you take in

her. I honour and love a sailor if he is honest and true, and I honour and love a yachtsman ; and young ladies who haven't yet got husbands, I would advise you, if you find yachtsmen to suit your taste who wish to marry you, not to refuse them, provided you can get the consent of your fathers and mothers, and grandmothers, and uncles and aunts, if it's necessary, or the lord chancellor, if you are wards in chancery, which latter is a pleasant thing in one respect, because it shows that you have money, but unpleasant in another, because you have no power over it. However, as I was saying, I stick up for yachtsmen, and here's success to all you who have yachts, and may you soon find fair companions to share the command with you ! ”

The baronet's speech was received with loud applause, though his hearers couldn't exactly make out what he meant. He might, possibly, have been a little elevated, and have been talking nonsense ; but still, as he had the character of being a pretty well wide-awake old gentleman, it was much more likely that he intended to hint that his daughters would be wise not to marry without his leave, and that he would show no great favour to fortune-hunters.

The time for the launch was drawing near. Charley Chesterton was in his element, moving here and there, and making all the arrangements. Some of the party remained on board the schooner, others wanted to be on the deck of the brig ; and those who escorted Fanny Pendergrast, who was to name her, had to be on shore, grouped in front of the yacht's bows. A band of music had arrived and struck up a lively tune, the sun shone forth brightly, a breeze blew out the numerous gay-coloured flags floating from flagstaffs on shore, from the brig herself, and from the surrounding vessels. The bows and figurehead were wreathed with flowers. The artist had copied a description rather of the great Goddess Diana of the Ephesians than of the Huntress, and the figure appeared standing on a crescent moon, with the same emblem on her head, and a tulip in her hand. Sir Paul, whose classical knowledge was limited, did not discover that the figure was not what it should have been, and was well content with the skyblue robes and gilt coronet on the figure's head. Chesterton had had a very elegant tent rigged before the bows of the vessel, and, as it was well adorned with flowers, it had somewhat the appearance of a temple of Flora. Fanny, accompanied by Emily and Polly, under the escort of the baronet, and several other ladies and gentlemen, assembled in the tent. A bottle of wine, also wreathed with flowers, was suspended from the bows.

“ Time and tide wait for no one. All is ready,” exclaimed Chesterton. “ Miss Fanny Pendergrast, the brig is to have the honour of being

named by you. By letting the bottle swing, you give the signal for the launch, and at the same moment pronounce the name the craft is henceforth to bear."

Fanny stood in a graceful attitude, holding back by a silken cord the bottle of wine which was to be broken against the bows. The carpenters, with their sledge-hammers in hand, stood ready to knock away the wedges. The gallant lieutenant gave the signal, a rich blush rose on the brow and cheek of the young lady, as their eyes met; it might have been from the excitement of the moment. She let go the silken cord, with a crash the bottle struck the bows, the wine was duly poured out, the name of the Diana was pronounced in a clear, sweet voice, some sharp strokes of hammers were heard, and the vessel began to glide along the ways towards the water, every moment increasing her speed; the band struck up a suitable tune, keeping time to the movement of the vessel, which in a few seconds plunged with a loud splash into the element which was to be her home for the future. She would have gone right across the harbour had she not been brought up by warps, prepared to check her. The people on shore, on her deck, and on board the Maid of Saragossa, and numerous other boats and vessels, cheered loudly and long. The launch was most successful; nothing could have gone off better, and everybody was satisfied. The more favoured of the guests were asked to dinner by the baronet, and the O'Dowdy, finding that he was not included, invited himself.

"It's not often I dine out of my yacht in summer, but as you have some other friends with you to celebrate this pleasant event, I'll break through my rule, Sir Paul, and just put my feet under your mahogany for this once, and I hope that you and the young ladies will come and pay me a return visit on board the Fair Imogene. She would be perfect if she had but a fair living lady on board. Ha, ha, ha! the time may come soon, baronet—eh?"

Of course Sir Paul could not well, without a downright cut, avoid including the O'Dowdy among his invited guests. One of the Miss Pendergrasts was, at all events, well pleased at this arrangement, though when her Hibernian admirer entered the room her sisters received him without any of that good-natured warmth of manner which they were accustomed to bestow on those they liked. The O'Dowdy, however, was not a man to be daunted by a far more chilling manner. He joked at and quizzed those who were the coldest to him, redoubled his attentions to Polly, and soon made it evident that she, at all events, did not regard him with dislike. Yachting was the chief subject of conversation at dinner. The plans for the summer were discussed.

"What do you propose doing, Captain Peppercorne?" asked the baronet.

"That depends on circumstances, Sir Paul," answered Ned, looking at Emily. "I may go foreign, or I may hug the island as lovingly as some of our friends. Sometimes I think of making a trip round Cape Horn, and spending a year or two among the islands of the Pacific. What say you, Chesterton; will you come and be my consort? In such a cruise, two vessels should always go together."

"Very pleasant under some circumstances," answered Charley, looking at Fanny; "but my ambition does not soar quite so high just now. I have had knocking about enough in my time to make me prefer short cruises, except on extraordinary occasions."

"I really think that I should like a cruise in the Pacific amazingly," said Fanny, evidently on the spur of the moment, for scarcely were the words out of her mouth than she blushed deeply, and Charley couldn't get her to look up at him again for some time.

"For my part," said the baronet, "my girls and I have been for long talking of going up the Mediterranean; there are so many places to be seen there close together. It's pretty smooth sailing generally, which suits them and me now, though in my day I used to enjoy a gale of wind and a heavy sea as much as any of you young men can do."

Before very long both Chesterton and Captain Peppercorne were talking of taking a cruise up the Straits, and the O'Dowd assured Polly that that was just the very thing he had purposed doing, and that he hoped they should meet often. Of course Polly was highly pleased, and it is possible that Fanny and Emily might have considered the proposed voyage of the two friends as a compliment to themselves.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE DIANA.

A FINE brig lay at anchor in Cowes Roads. She appeared as fit to go round the world, if needs be, as any vessel afloat. The burgee flying from her masthead showed that she was a yacht. Close to her lay a schooner, a seagoing, business-looking craft; a little astern of her a yawl; and, at a respectful distance, a lugger, which, although a yacht, had much less a yacht look about her than her companions. There were a few other vessels, but not many, as the season had scarcely

began ; parliament was still sitting, balls and dinner parties were still going on in London, and the streets of the metropolis had not yet risen to that oven heat which drives its citizens to seek the margin of the briny ocean. Several gigs were in waiting at the steps, and a large party were assembled in readiness to embark ; ladies laden with shawls, and parasols, and sketch-books, or the last new novel ; gentlemen with arms full of cloaks, and rugs, and hats ; and servants with hampers, and baskets, and bandboxes, and other light things which had been forgotten. The Pendergrast family were going on board their yacht to live. They were bound also on a pic-nic at Alum Bay. Everybody seemed in high spirits. The day was lovely, the water sparkled brightly ; the breeze was sufficiently to the eastward, and brisk enough to ensure a speedy passage there ; and as to coming back, picnickers do not usually trouble themselves much on that point. Each vessel conveyed a party, who were to meet on the yellow beach, drink the water which flowed from the cliff, and boil the potatoes themselves. The Miss Pendergrasts might possibly have preferred a different arrangement, but several lady friends of Peppercorne's and Chesterton's had just arrived in the island, and invited themselves on board. However, there was no lack of guests on board the Diana ; several City friends of Sir Paul's had come down for the occasion, and he, not dreaming that any of his more refined acquaintances would discover anything peculiar about them, was in his glory. He stood on the deck of his vessel to receive his guests as they came off.

"Ah ! here's the alderman !" he exclaimed. " Snuggins, my dear fellow, glad to see you ! Let me introduce you to Lady Dashton. Her ladyship has an arduous task in chaperoning all these young ladies."

The alderman bowed, and expressed his readiness to share her labours, which created a considerable titter among the younger portion of the fair guests. Lady Dashton was a widow, who, it was supposed, would have no objection to change her condition, and that it was much more likely that she would employ the time in setting her cap at the wealthy alderman than in looking after her charges. The Miss Pendergrasts amused themselves meantime by watching through two or three telescopes for their guests as they embarked.

"Oh ! here comes old Lady Cheeteem and her daughters and two nieces, and three or four gentlemen in tow ; but who they are, I can't make out !" cried Carry. "They seem to be a free-and-easy set, at all events. The men are dressing up in the ladies' shawls and hats in sight of all the people on the quay."

"Those three girls would make any men free and easy," remarked

Jane, who was the chief stickler for decorum in the family. "I only hope that she and Lady Dashton won't fall out."

"Mere fun if they do," cried Polly. "They can't well begin to scratch, and a little sparring with the tongue will do no great harm. But there is another party just come down. I say, Carry, who can they be?"

"I verily believe they are those Nopses," said Carry. "Yes, I see Mamma Nops, and Euphemia and Agatha, and a pale gentleman in a clerical habit. What do they bring him off for, I should like to know? Papa asked Mrs. Nops, but he did not give her leave to bring any friends."

"People are not very particular on these occasions," observed Jane. "There are two other boats coming off. I can make out Colonel Thundercloud stepping into one of them. We shall have the whole history of his campaigns on our way down to the Needles. However, his dry sense is vastly superior to the twaddle one often hears."

"Talk of twaddle; we shall presently have enough of it, for here comes that prodigiously fine gentleman the Rev. Augustine Chasuble, whom we saw dressed up in wonderfully gay robes at St. Barbara's Church a few Sundays before we left town," exclaimed Carry. "Yes, I thought so. And there is that Mr. Mopus, his humble friend and admirer. I only hope that the young gentleman Mrs. Nops is bringing off does not belong to that party. She is always talking about beautiful churches, and beautiful altars, and beautiful vestments, and beautiful priests, too. But then we always thought her a great goose. They say that she and her daughters go regularly to confession, and they positively smell of incense when one meets them in a morning."

"Come, come, Carry, you are too severe!" exclaimed Polly, with as much pretended indignation as she could muster. "I don't see why handsome men shouldn't wear fine dresses as well as handsome women, and good singing is pleasant, and so is sweet incense, and processions are very pretty things to look at; and as for what they signify, and what the priests teach, I leave to wiser heads than mine to explain."

"You have ably defended your friends," observed Jane. "Happily, here comes Mr. Richard Twistlewell, who, Lady Dashton asserted when she introduced him to papa, has the whole code of laws at his fingers' ends."

The prattle of the young ladies was cut short by the arrival of their guests on board. A fresh breeze sprang up, and the Diana, with Chesterton's schooner, Peppercorne's yawl, and the Irish lugger made sail to the westward. The lugger, being outside, got away first, and,

having the benefit of a strong breeze, held her own ahead of the rest. The brig behaved very well, but Sir Paul was rather vexed to find that the Maid of Saragossa could almost sail round him. It might have been more politic in Charley to have dragged a sail overboard. It put Sir Paul somewhat out, and prevented him from paying that attention to his guests which he had intended. Lady Dashton, who hated the water, and had come for no other object than to win him if she could, was much disappointed, and had to console herself with receiving the attentions of stout Alderman Snuggins, and, to do him justice, they were constant and observable. The rest of the party were soon engaged in exhibiting their various idiosyncrasies to each other; not that they were in general professional. The colonel, an old bachelor, had invented a baby-jumper, and the lawyer talked learnedly of flowers and flower-shows; but the Rev. Augustine Chasuble had not been many minutes on board before he hoisted his colours, and fired a broadside against the memory of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer.

"Certainly, certainly, the Reformation was a great mistake," chimed in Mr. Mopus.

"Yas, werry," observed the pale young deacon, as he announced himself. "There was some life and spirit and true religion in the land before Heary the Eighth upset it, but we'll get it all back soon."

"Not, young sir, while John Bull retains sense in his brain, a fist to strike with, and one leg to stand on, while he kicks out all traitors and humbugs with the other," exclaimed the alderman. "No, no, that sort of stuff will go down with fashionable young ladies and gentlemen who go to so many balls and raree-shows during the week that they can't do without their dram of excitement on the Sunday, and know as much about the Testament as they do about the Koran. I wonder when you come out pleasuring on the water that you don't try to get your ribbons, and scarlet robes, and masses, and incense, and all that sort of rubbish out of your head. It would do you good, believe me it would, and perhaps you'd think better of it before you return home. I was in trade once—I'm not ashamed of it—and when I went out pleasuring, just as you are doing, I used to throw overboard all thoughts of trade and business."

The alderman gained the day, or, at all events, so far silenced his opponents, that whatever they said after this was in whispers into the ears of the fairer portion of their companions.

The four yachts stood on together down the Channel. On the right hand appeared the lofty tower of lordly Eaglehurst; farther to the west the well-wooded banks of the Beaulieu River, where once many a goodly

ship was built, but are now deserted, except when a party of picnickers or tourists visit its picturesque abbey. Farther on they came off Lymington Creek with "Jack in the Basket." There next arose ahead of them the tall red lighthouses on Hurst Point, and its round cheese-like castle and formidable line of fortifications scarcely rising above the sand, yet capable of sending a fleet of proud ships to the bottom, should one attempt to force its way as an enemy up the Solent.

"Provided the said fleet isn't composed of iron-clads with circular turrets," observed Mr. O'Dowdy, who had just before, growing tired of his own society, come on board the brig, where the previous remark had been made.

"Oh, those dreadful iron-clads! I think that there should be a law made against their use. They can't do anybody any good, and are sure, from what I hear of them, to do a great deal of harm," exclaimed Mrs. Nops. "Oh, Mr. Augustine Chasuble! can't you use your influence with those in high quarters to get such things put down? It's terrible—perfectly terrible!"

"Indeed it is, my daughter," answered the Rev. Augustine Chasuble—priest, as he called himself, of the English Church. I feel assured that the time is coming when the Church will be able to exert itself in so good a cause; that is to say, when we have united the Church of England, now like a long-estranged child, to the mother Church of Rome, and joined to it that of the East."

"Ah, yes! that is what we were subscribing for last Sunday," said Mrs. Nops! "How satisfactory! and it will be an additional reason for wishing it success, if it puts a stop to iron-clads. I often think if a battle between those fearful iron-clads was to take place, what would become of the balls? Why, I don't suppose there would be any part of the island safe from them."

"I suspect, marm, that you'll have a long time to wait before you see our honest, straightforward Church of England joined to that of Rome or Greece," said Alderman Snuggins. "I've traded, marm, to the East and to Italy, and I know enough about the religions of both people to wish to have no connexion with either one or the other. I say, marm, that they are either fools or knaves who wish for such an event. I'm willing to believe that they are the former. Beg pardon, Mr. Chasuble, nothing personal, you'll understand."

Mr. Chasuble, however, seemed to think the remarks very personal indeed, and eyed the alderman as if he would like to attack him tooth and nail.

Come come, Mr. Chasuble, don't let's fall out about your non-

sense," said the good-humoured alderman, seeing the frown gathering on his opponent's brow. " You like frippery and froth ; I like roast beef and plum-pudding, that's the only difference between us. I say, that's a fine view away to the south-west of us."

He pointed to the lofty cliffs of Alum Bay, part of which, tinged by mineral springs, present a curiously striped appearance of red and yellow of many tints, and blue and green, while at the extreme west end of the island the chalk cliffs stand sheer up out of the blue sea, terminated by the Needle rocks. The outer one of them has been cut away to make a platform, on which a lighthouse has been built, instead of that which stood at the top of the downs, and was frequently obscured by the mists which gathered round it. Due south of the brig were the hideous red-brick batteries of Freshwater, but which, notwithstanding their ugliness, are likely to give a good account of the ships of an enemy venturing to pass them. The tide still serving, though the wind was light, Alum Bay was at length reached, and the yachts, one after the other, brought up. There can be no doubt that the party could have had a much more comfortable dinner on board one of the yachts ; but people in search of amusement often put themselves to very great inconvenience—so the ladies and gentlemen, and the hampers of provisions, and plates and dishes, were in due course landed, a good many of the latter to be broken, and a spot on the beach selected for their dining place. The sun at that time having retired behind a cloud, no one remembered that its rays, striking directly down on them under a chalk cliff, without a breath of air, the place might possibly be rather warm. It had been agreed that they should give themselves a vast deal of unnecessary trouble, and that the servants should do nothing beyond bringing the hampers on shore, and afterwards washing up the dishes. Some were to collect drift-wood, others to scrape the potatoes, others to bring the water, while the O'Dowdy had undertaken to superintend their boiling—an art in which he justly affirmed that the inhabitants of the green isle of Erin could not be surpassed. While the party were commencing their preparations a large cutter stole round the Needles with the first of the flood, and stood into the bay. A boat immediately put off from her, and a youngish-looking man sprang on shore dressed in the height of yachting fashion. No sooner did he draw near than Mrs. and the Miss Cheeteems rushed towards him, while Euphemia and Agatha Nops exclaimed, " Oh, there is that dear, delightful, dancing Jack Leeson ! " Others by their remarks showed that he was not a stranger to them.

Having shaken the hands of the Miss Cheeteems, as if he would wring

them off, he went round bowing to some and greeting others of the company in the same cordial way.

"Saw a party on the beach—was certain that I should have friends among you—so, tired of my own society, came ashore," he observed, in an off-hand rattling tone. "Did not expect to find so many friends, though. Well, what are you about?—scraping potatoes! Well, a good example inspires me. I think that I could make a dumpling—shall it be plain or with plums? Have we, though, the necessary ingredients?"

Inquiry was made, but neither flour nor suet was to be found. Jack, however, was not to be balked, but, hauling his boat, he instantly sent her back for the required ingredients. They were brought by the time the potatoes were in the pot, and then he set to work in apparently the most scientific manner—tucking his sleeves up to his elbow, and fastening a napkin round his waist. He then collected basins and tubs, and having put in the flour and suet, and raisins, and other ingredients, he began kneading away with great vigour. There was a twinkling in his mischievous eyes, as if he thought what he was about a very good joke. He next seized upon some elegant doilys and valuable table napkins, and soon made pudding bags of them by filling them with his mixture. Fresh fires had to be lighted, and every pot that could be obtained was brought into requisition, that Jack Leeson's puddings might be boiled.

"Hot work, pudding making!" he exclaimed, as he washed the flour off his hands and pulled down his shirt sleeves. "Now I vote we climb the cliffs and admire the beauties of nature while they and the murphies are boiling. Miss Caroline Pendergrast, may I have the facility of escorting you?"

Carry was nothing loth, for, though Jack had only just before been introduced, he was good-looking, and she rather liked fast young men. The example they set was followed by the whole of the younger members of the party; Lady Dashton, Mrs. Cheeteem and a few of the other dowagers, with Sir Paul and his friend the alderman, and the Rev. Mr. Chasuble, who felt rightly that his blue collar would be woefully disarranged if he made the attempt to climb, remaining on the beach. The sand cliffs in all directions were soon covered with straggling groups, who soon became divided, some going up one ravine or winding path, and some another, till they reached the downs before.

"I do not think that we chaperones are of much use," sagaciously observed Mrs. Nops, folding her hands before her.

"Too true, dear lady," said Mr. Chasuble, with an upturned eye. "But then, remember, for your consolation, I shall be able to ascertain

that they ordered their conversation aright, and did nothing wrong. Ah, that admirable institution, the Confessional!—what an advantage—what an assistance to mothers and guardians of youth! How grateful we should be to our holy mother Church for establishing it!"

"Ah, truly, yes," murmured Mrs. Nops, looking up at Euphemia and Agatha, who, with Mr. Mopus and the Rev. S. Onyphrius Albe, were perched on the cliffs high above their heads. "I wonder, now, what they are saying to each other."

"I will find out, dear madam, ere long," answered Mr. Chasuble, knowingly, nodding his head.

The young people meantime, had paired off as young people are apt to do. Carry and Polly, with Leeson and O'Dowdy, had kept near each other. They reached the top of the cliffs and turned westward. Here they were joined by their sisters and some other young ladies, with Peppercorne and Chesterton. The downs here are of a peculiar and very dangerous character. At first, they slope very gradually upwards from the top of the cliffs; but, towards the west, the slope becomes steeper and steeper, till it is almost perpendicular, yet the transition is so gradual, that it is scarcely perceptible by the eye.

Most of the party sat down on the top of the downs to watch a small steamer coming in from the westward; some pronounced her to be a gun-boat, others a yacht, and as she drew nearer the latter were found to be right. Polly and Carry, mean time, took it into their heads to walk along the downs towards the west, not perceiving that the ground over which they passed became steeper and steeper. Still on they went, till suddenly they discovered that they were actually sliding towards the edge of the cliff. At the same moment, they became aware of the danger of their position. They did the wisest thing they could—sat down; and then they did what was somewhat foolish, they began to cry. Their terror increased; they looked at the ground over which they had passed, and felt that they could not possibly walk back over it. If they even attempted to move, they found themselves slipping down towards the edge of the fearful cliff. They had gone so far beyond the rest of the party that no one observed their danger.

"Oh, Carry, Carry, what shall we do? We shall both be dashed to pieces," said Polly, beginning to cry.

"Oh dear, dear, I hope not," exclaimed her sister, also bursting into tears. "To be picked up mangled corpses down on the sands there, where we expected to enjoy our pic-nic so much, it's very dreadful."

Their cries increased in loudness, till at length some of their friends heard them. Leeson and O'Dowdy, who had been looking for them,

now first saw their danger. Never, perhaps, had Jack Leeson's heart before sunk so low. He had himself been once on the very spot, and with difficulty scrambled off again. O'Dowdy, when he saw Polly crying, was instantly rushing towards her.

"Stop, stop, my dear fellow," cried Leeson. "You'll go over, and carry them with you. Let me go first on my hands and knees, and follow my example. Work your way diagonally upwards. Take off your boots, and trust to your fingers and toes to gripe hold of the grass."

O'Dowdy, following Jack's advice, they began their expedition. How the young ladies had managed to get so far over the slippery grass it was difficult to conceive, for even by themselves they found it no easy task. Still they worked their way forward on their hands and knees, and at length reached the young ladies, who, when they saw them coming, had ceased crying. Leeson took charge of Carry, and the O'Dowdy entreated Polly to put herself under his care.

"Never fear a bit, my darlin'," he exclaimed, in the exuberance of his feelings. "If we are to go we'll go over together, but we'll not do that same as long as I've nails on my fingers and toes. Just take off your boots, and I'll put them in my pockets, and we'll get on all the better."

Polly did as she was advised, and Carry followed her example.

"A capital idea, Dan," exclaimed Leeson, leading the way, holding Carry round the waist with one arm, while with his other hand and feet he crawled along the downs. More than once he could with difficulty prevent himself from slipping. Carry seemed to be unable to do anything to help herself, but clung confidingly to his arm: Polly was equally well supported by O'Dowdy; and the two couple, in this most unfashionable if not unromantic mode of progression, at length reached their expectant friends. They were warmly welcomed, and the gallantry of the two gentlemen highly lauded.

"I shall always be grateful," said Carry, looking affectionately at Leeson.

"And so shall I," said Polly, with a tender glance at O'Dowdy.

Probably neither of them would have expressed their sentiments so freely under other circumstances. Perhaps, also, under other circumstances, their swains would not have reciprocated them. However, in a short time it became very evident that gratitude was likely to ripen into love. Leeson forgot all about his dumplings, and O'Dowdy about his potatoes. They were recalled at length to a recollection of their duties by Chesterton and Peppercorne, and the party descended, some-

what tired, hot, and hungry, to the beach. They were received with showers of complaints from the elders, who declared that they were almost starved, and had had to satisfy their appetites with bread and cheese. On this, O'Dowdy recollected his potatoes. On examining one of the pots, he found that they were in a sad state of tumble-to-piecedness.

"My compositions are, I am sure, free from that fault," exclaimed Leeson, hooking one out of the pot. He swung it to and fro at the end of a big fork, to cool it, he said. "Now for a dish," he cried. The doily was untied, and out rolled a dumpling, with a sound which showed that it was as hard as a round shot. "Never mind, the next will be softer," said the amateur cook; but that proved to be as hard as the first, and so did every one of the rest.

"Faith, now, they'll be nice aiting for any gentleman or young lady, maybe, who's desperately in love, and wants to get out of it," exclaimed O'Dowdy, with a knowing wink, which Polly didn't quite like.

"You'll not eat one, I suppose, Mr. O'Dowdy?" she said, demurely.

"No, my darlin'—I beg pardon, Miss Polly Pengergrast—I am perfectly content with the state of my feelings," answered O'Dowdy, with a tender glance at her; but as the gentleman was rather in the habit of bestowing tender glances on pretty girls, this might mean nothing. She was assisting in turning the "murphies," as he called the potatoes, into the dishes.

As there was an abundant supply of substantials, as well as of luxuries, the condition of the dumplings was of no consequence. In vain Jack tried to get his friends to partake of them, and when he pressed them very hard, it was proposed he should dine off them himself.

A grave-looking gentleman was added to the party, who proved to be Mr. Gilbert Halliday, owner of the steam-yacht *Aspasia*. He had been for some time acquainted with Sir Paul, and from his manner towards Miss Pendergrast, it seemed not impossible that she would some day become Mrs. Halliday. All the party were tolerably tired with their climb, and as it was impossible to dance on the shingles, most of them sat quietly in their places. A few strolled off to pick up pebbles, or to collect some coloured sand, or to sketch; and at length it was announced that unless they embark forthwith, as the wind was light, that they would to a certainty lose the tide to Cowes. It was currently reported the next day that the five Miss Pendergrasts were engaged before they reached Cowes, but time was to show whether the report was true.

CHAPTER IV.

A FOREIGN VOYAGE.

SIR PAUL and his spirited daughters very soon got tired of cruising round and round the Isle of Wight, even though accompanied frequently by the Cleopatra and Maid of Saragossa, and sometimes by the Lady of Lyons, the Fair Imogene, and the Aspasia. Chesterton was an accepted suitor, Peppercorne looked upon himself as one, and the rest of the gentlemen had, it was conjectured, made up their minds to propose, though they had not done so formerly. Young ladies with thirty thousand pounds apiece are generally aware that they will experience no great difficulty in finding suitable husbands. The Miss Pendergrasts were, therefore, perfectly ready to go foreign, and to let their lovers follow, if they wished. They were to go up the Mediterranean, to visit several places of interest on its shores, and to return home before the termination of the summer. Chesterton agreed to accompany the Diana, and Captain Peppercorne begged that he might do so likewise.

Mr. Halliday wrote M.P. at the end of his name, and, whatever he might wish to do, his parliamentary duties must, he said, keep him at home; Jack Leeson did not care a rap for Carthage, Cairo, Greece, Italy, Acre, or Constantinople, and was not, he thought, quite in love enough to make him give up his usual amusements at home; while the O'Dowdy had reasons for not quitting English waters just then which he did not wish to explain—in reality, he was engaged in raising the wind, and until he had done so he could not very conveniently pay his crew, while without payment they declined going foreign. This was a disappointment to Polly.

"There is only way to mend the matter, my darlin'," observed the O'Dowdy, with his most insinuating look.

"What is that?" asked Polly innocently.

"Just run off with me, and become Mrs. O'Dowdy at once, my darlin'. It's a happy woman I'll make ye, and the lugger is big enough for the two of us, and I'll pay all my debts, and won't it be pleasant then?"

Polly hesitated. It might be pleasant to be Mrs. O'Dowdy, or very much the contrary; and she had, she recollects, been told that some young ladies possessed of thirty thousand pounds, who had run away with Irish gentlemen, had found that their fortunes had passed out of their own power into that of their leige lords, and been expended.

When a young lady thinks this she is very apt to decline the gentleman's generous proposal, and to stay at home, if she has got two grains of sense in her head. Polly, fortunately for herself, had several grains, so she said that she preferred taking a voyage in her papa's yacht to the Mediterranean to trusting herself on board the buccaneering-looking lugger, and that when she came back she would see about it. O'Dowdy was dreadfully disappointed ; he thought that he had secured Polly. The more he pressed his suit, the more resolved she became, like a wise girl, not to agree to his proposals.

"Ah ! it's a cruel creature ye are, Polly, and it isn't myself would have thought it," he said, with a sigh which he intended to be pathetic.

The O'Dowdy made his bow, and pulled back to the lugger, which prepared to get under weigh to accompany the brig out at the Needles. Jack couldn't resist the temptation also of going part of the way. When it came to the point, he found that he had been more captivated by Carry than he had supposed ; still he couldn't bring himself to go on board at once manfully, and ask her to marry him, as Chesterton had done Fanny. He had got some notion into his head about losing his liberty, and he dreaded the laughter of some of his wild bachelor friends. The weather was fine and the wind fair, and the yachts, with all the canvas they could carry, stood down Channel, looking as gay, and fresh, and trim as yachts can look, with the exception of the Fair Imogene, and she appeared very much like some daring pirate which had crept in among them.

Five young ladies on board a yacht, with only their papa to amuse them, might have found it rather dull, but they were all thoroughly good-natured, jolly girls, never quarrelled with each other, and always made themselves as happy as they could. They might also have had a notion that they should receive an occasional visit from Chesterton and Peppercorne. Carry might have thought it possible that Jack Leeson would follow, and Mr. Halliday had assured Jane that as soon as his parliamentary duties would allow he should steam after her in the Aspasia. The second day, when a little to the westward of Plymouth, the lugger was seen to haul her wind as if about to leave the fleet. Glasses were directed towards her. Suddenly a figure rushed on deck, and laid about him with a boat's stretcher ; it was the O'Dowdy in his shirt-sleeves. While he was thus engaged, the foresail, and then the mainsail, was lowered, followed by the mizen. Polly was below at the time, or she might, perhaps, have asked her father to put back, and ascertain what was the matter. Her sisters could not, of course, understand it ; but as neither of the other yachts took any notice of

the circumstance, they naturally concluded that it could not be one of much importance. By the time, however, that Polly came on deck the lugger was not to be seen. She would not have been a true woman had not she made many inquiries as to what had become of the lugger. She believed, however, that he would very soon come up again with them, as they proposed putting into Falmouth for fresh provisions, and she could not suppose that he would go away all together without a word of farewell. The next morning the four yachts brought up in Falmouth Harbour, and it then came out that Jack Leeson knew the state of affairs on board the Fair Imogene, and that the crew had determined not to go beyond Plymouth unless their wages were paid. Poor Polly was rather melancholy at hearing this, the more so that she could not help acknowledging that the account was in all probability perfectly true. Jack himself, however, had by this time become so smitten with Carry that he determined to accompany the Diana. As he was well known at Falmouth, he had no difficulty in procuring stores, and making all necessary pecuniary arrangements for the voyage. It was agreed that the four yachts should keep close together, and thus in good order they crossed the now tranquil Bay of Biscay. Sir Paul had great confidence in his own knowledge of navigation. His master, Dore, was a good seaman, but was no navigator; he had, consequently, to engage a mate, Webb by name, as navigator, for he had the wisdom not to trust entirely to his own knowledge on the subject. He was, however, quite delighted when he found that his day's work agreed with Webb's. Gibraltar was quickly reached. Only once during the voyage had the three gentlemen been able to pay a visit on board the Diana. They now came to inquire after the young ladies and Sir Paul. Leeson had intended to return to England, but no sooner was he again exposed to the fascinations of Carry than he once more resolved to continue with the Diana.

A cruise through the Mediterranean is very delightful, as there is no part of the world of the same extent which affords more objects of interest; but it is not without its dangers and other drawbacks. There are white squalls and Riff pirates, and the cholera and plague, and, worse than all, quarantine to be encountered, and occasionally a European or American, or more frequently a Greek, takes to do a little plundering and murdering on his own account, and the yacht of an English milord is looked upon as likely to prove an acceptable prize. The Diana, with her consorts, was of course able to set all such gentry at defiance; a sharp look-out enabled them to meet the only white squall they encountered without damage; though the cholera and plague raged at

several places they visited, by avoiding any communication with the unhealthy part they kept both at arms' length ; but the quarantine beat them wherever they went. Sir Paul became irate, though not a grain of blue pills nor rhubarb had been swallowed on board, nor any other drug to his knowledge. Having touched at Alexandria, at not a port he entered were he and his friends allowed to go on shore. At length they sailed westward, and by the time they reached Naples the forty days had expired since they touched at an infected place. It was proposed that, after seeing the lions of Naples, the party should take a trip into the interior. Pompei was explored, Vesuvius climbed, Herculaneum descended into, and numberless other places visited, when preparations were made for their intended expedition. Sir Paul had been very averse to it, for he had heard of bandits and brigands, and young ladies carried off captives and kept in durance vile. The three gentlemen had even hesitated about the matter, but the young ladies gained the day, as young ladies are apt to do under such circumstances. They travelled on horseback, and the men went from each yacht to form an escort, well armed, which, with the gentlemen and the necessary guides, it was thought would form a force no brigands would dare to attack. For three or four days they wandered among the Calabrian mountains, enjoying the scenery ; but, though they had brought a supply of provisions, the accommodation was rough, and the work tolerably hard. They had one fine afternoon descended a mountain into a valley, which was to lead them to a village, where they proposed stopping for the night. The valley narrowed into a gorge, a suspicious-looking spot, where fifty men might hold the ground against a thousand.

Captain Peppercorne had just made some remark to this effect, when suddenly, in front and scattered about on the cliffs on either side, there appeared a number of picturesque-looking personages, with long guns in their hands, pointed in the direction of the travellers. The young ladies behaved like heroines. They did not shriek nor tremble ; but Carry exclaimed, "Let us ride quietly on, as if they could not mean to stop us."

Carry's advice was followed, but the picturesque gentlemen with the long guns soon showed that they had no intention of allowing the travellers to pass unmolested.

"Stop and deliver your jewels, and watches, and purses!" exclaimed some one in a gruff voice from behind a rock. "Stop, I say, or we fire."

Had not the ladies been present the yachtmen would undoubtedly have charged the brigands, and, perhaps, have put them to flight ;

instead of this they hesitated. The brigands, knowing that Englishmen are apt to show fight, thought by firing a shot to intimidate them. It struck poor Webb, the mate of the Diana, who, throwing up his arms, fell to the ground. The moment they smelt powder, the guides took to their heels, and the travellers were left to the mercy of the brigands. One of the latter now shouted out from behind a rock that he was sorry any one had been hurt, and that he and his companions only wanted plunder ; if they would stay quiet not another shot would be fired.

"By all means let us accept the rascal's terms !" exclaimed Sir Paul, trembling for his daughter's safety.

Meantime, Chesterton, aided by Fanny, was seeing to Webb. The wound was a very severe one, and it was with the very greatest difficulty that they could stanch the blood ; indeed, it seemed likely that it would prove fatal.

The brigands made short work ; they were evidently adepts. Purses, watches, and jewels were quickly transferred to their keeping.

"And now, my friends, it has just occurred to me that I may get a little more out of you !" exclaimed a good-looking bandit, who seemed to be a chief. "I propose taking charge of two of these young ladies, and when I receive a thousand scudi from you, I will undertake to deliver them up safe and sound into your hands."

"Close up, men, and surround the ladies ; we must fight rather than yield to this demand !" exclaimed Captain Peppercorne.

Before the brigands understood what was intended, the travellers were in a position to defend themselves.

"Your demand cannot be agreed to," said Peppercorne, who spoke tolerable Italian. "But we are reasonable men, and know your requirements. We will give you our bond for the money to be paid in any way you may wish."

"We always take security," answered the brigand, dryly. "It is our custom ; we never depart from it. We should have preferred the society of the young ladies, but if you object to their coming, we will take two gentlemen instead. You any your companion there," pointing to Jack Leeson.

Jack said that he should be very happy to remain as a hostage ; that he should rather like the lark, to see the way the fellows lived, and that his bankers at Naples would furnish the money. Peppercorne could, of course, make no objection ; indeed, he was thankful for any means by which the Miss Pendergrasts could be saved from danger. The two gentlemen, therefore, having bade their friends good-bye, prepared to start up the mountains with the brigands, while the travellers, in no

very happy mood, turned their horses' heads towards Naples. They had no great fear for the safety of their friends, but Emily and Carry felt it very dull without the society of their devoted and acknowledged suitors. Naples was, however, at length reached, and the stipulated ransom raised and forwarded to its destination. It was to be seen how far the brigands were men of their word.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATE OF THE DIANA—CONCLUSION.

ABOUT a week after the events described, Captain Peppercorne and Jack Leeson appeared on board the Diana, and were welcomed by Emily and Carry as young ladies would naturally welcome gentlemen who are engaged to marry them, and who have, besides, for their sakes, just gone through no little danger and inconvenience. They described the brigands' life as far from an agreeable one. Very often they were hard up for food, in bad weather their lodging in the mountains was wretched, and they were constantly in apprehension of an attack from the troops out in search of them.

Poor Webb, the mate of the Diana, had never recovered from the wound he had received, and just as the yachts were ready for sea he died. It was impossible to fill his place, for Chesterton had found his own master a very inefficient navigator, and he could, therefore, not leave his own yacht. Sir Paul was, however, not sorry to put his own knowledge of navigation into practice, and he, therefore, announced his intention of navigating the Diana to England. The whole party were indeed anxious to be at home. Polly wished to learn what had become of O'Dowdy, Jane wished to see Mr. Halliday, and the other three Miss Pendergrasts were eager to be at home, perhaps because it had been arranged that they should marry the three gentlemen to whom they were engaged as soon as they got there.

Gibraltar was reached in safety. Sir Paul found no great difficulty in getting to the far-famed port, and so contented was he with his skill that he kept to his determination of navigating the yacht to England. Chesterton ventured to expostulate.

"Tut, tut, man!" answered the baronet. "It's what is done by thousands upon thousands of fellows of every nation under the sun every year, and I really think that I have a head on my shoulders."

"Very well, sir. You will allow me, at all events, as a naval officer to suggest the best course to steer, and we will all, as heretofore, keep together," answered Chesterton.

He had no great anxiety as to the result; and probably, had not his Fanny been on board the brig, he would not have troubled himself about the matter. The weather appeared settled, and the vessels were not likely to separate during the night. Away they sailed, everybody in good spirits, and soon left the old Rock of Gibraltar far astern.

The proper course had been given, and the baronet, who soon got tired of making the exact calculations and taking the observations which would have been necessary had he been alone, contented himself with inquiring the latitude and longitude every day at noon of his intended sons-in-law, and dotting them down on his chart. His great pleasure, however, was in instructing Dore, who assured his master that he had already got a good inkling of the matter from him. The wind was light and the sea smooth, so that every day the gentlemen came on board the brig, and very pleasant both parties found it.

Things were not, however, always to continue in that state. They had just about entered the Bay of Biscay when it came on to blow hard in their teeth from the north-west. Dore proposed heaving-to, as a very heavy sea had got up, but Chesterton signalled that as the wind was fair for Corunna, they should run there. He led in the schooner, and the other three vessels followed. There is an excellent lighthouse, and the harbour is remarkably easy of access. By midnight all four yachts were at anchor in smooth water—a state of existence all wise people appreciate after knocking about at sea.

In the morning they went on shore, and rode out over the ground on which Sir John Moore fought his last battle, foiling the hitherto victorious army of the French, and then they visited the hero's tomb on the ramparts of the town, where he was buried at the dead of night. For three days the yachts remained at anchor, till the summer gale had expended itself, and then once more they sailed for old England. The weather, however, had become uncertain. Scarcely had they lost sight of land than a thick fog came on, with the wind from the northward just as it was growing dark. So suddenly, indeed, did the fog rise, that the vessels were soon completely shut out from each other. On shore it may be best to stand still if you lose a person in a crowd; at sea that cannot be done. Chesterton did the best thing he could under the circumstances of the case; he fired a gun at intervals, and stood close hauled to the westward. The gun was answered, and he hoped by the Diana. He stood on all night, expecting to see her and

his other consorts in the morning. Great was his disappointment when he discovered only the yawl.

Meantime, Sir Paul, when the fog came on and he lost sight of the other yachts, began to consider what course he ought to steer. It occurred to him that the safest was the course Chesterton had given him when leaving Gibraltar; whether, however, this was the safest, was to be proved. While still somewhat in doubt, to his great satisfaction, he caught sight of the cutter. He hailed her. Leeson replied that his master had been seized with a fit, but that he had no doubt the course Sir Paul proposed steering was the right one, and that he would keep close to him. The morning found the cutter near the brig. The baronet, perfectly satisfied with his nautical acquirements, felt sure that he should pass some ten miles or so to the westward of Ushant—near enough, however, to show him his exact position. On he accordingly stood with perfect confidence. Leeson, who did not pretend to know anything about navigation, followed in his wake under easy sail, and was rather annoyed when the mate suggested that they were somewhat too much to the eastward. Fanny and Emily were sorry to lose the society of Chesterton and Peppercorne, but, not dreaming that their father was out in his course, fully expected that they would soon rejoin them. The wind was light, and the sea tolerably smooth. For three days the brig glided calmly on. The third night began; the sky was obscured by mist, and darkness very considerable. Leeson had considerable difficulty in keeping the brig in sight. The young ladies had retired to their cabins. Sir Paul told Dore to keep a sharp look-out, as he hoped, should the weather clear, that they might, ere long, see Ushant on the starboard hand. Dore, though he had no great respect for his employer's knowledge of seamanship, thought that he must be all right in the matter of navigation.

About midnight, as the brig was gliding calmly on, a loud crash was heard; another and another followed; the vessel trembled from head to stern.

"We are on shore—we are on shore!" was the cry.

Sir Paul, awoke by the fearful sound, rushed on deck, crying out for his daughters.

"Here we are, papa—here we are! What has happened?" exclaimed the five young ladies, who had rushed on deck with cloaks and shawls, and anything they could pick up, thrown over their shoulders.

The sea, which appeared very calm when the vessel was gliding over it, now broke heavily over the opposing rocks and against the unfortunate brig. Dore showed that he was a true man, and was as cool as a

cucumber. He said that he made out the land at the distance of three or four cables' length, and advised that the ladies should be immediately conveyed to it.

"We are ready for anything," said Jane. And her sisters repeated the same words.

"Bless you, young ladies! You are of the right sort!" exclaimed Dore, as he began with some of the crew to lower a boat on the port or shore side of the vessel, where the water was comparatively smooth.

"What has become of the cutter?—what has become of the Lady of Lyons?" asked Carry even then amid the danger to which she was exposed, like a true woman thinking of her lover.

"Don't know, Miss. I'm afraid she's ashore; but we'll go and see as soon as we get you all safe," answered Dore. "If she hauled off in time, so much the better for us."

Fortunately, the vessel drove into rather deeper water on the inside of the reef, where the boat could float free of the rocks. It was necessary to make two trips, as the gig could not safely carry all the party. Sir Paul insisted that his three eldest daughters should go first, while he and the two younger remained. There was no time to be lost. The cabin was already full of water, and no additional clothing could be procured. The night was warm, so that they were not chilled as they might have been. Their father assisted to lower them into the boat. Dore took charge of her. They soon disappeared in the darkness. The poor baronet was very unhappy. He felt that he had done a very foolish thing in attempting to navigate his vessel, but how he had managed to cast her away it did not yet occur to him.

The wind was increasing; the sea came rolling in higher and higher every minute, and dashing with fury over the reef. Sir Paul's anxiety became very great. He wished that at first, while it was possible, he had lowered the large gig on the starboard side. Now it could not be done without the risk of her being swamped alongside. It became necessary, too, to secure the two young ladies to the bulwarks, lest a sea should wash them away. He and the men had great difficulty in holding on. Still nothing could be done till the return of the boat. It seemed an age since she had gone. Had she reached the shore in safety, or had she been lost? The crew crowded round their employer. No one blamed him, poor man; some proposed making a raft—others offered to lower the starboard gig at all risks.

"The vessel is new and strong, and will hold together for many an hour yet, I hope," answered Sir Paul. "If the first boat has been lost, we will not risk another till day-light. It seems to me, also, that

the sea does not break over the brig as heavily as at first." Others had remarked this.

"We struck the reef nearly at the top of high water, and as the tide rose, beat over it; the tide is now falling, and will leave us soon inside the reef and in smooth water," observed one of the crew. "Should this really be the case, of course it would be wise to remain on board."

All were silent for some time. People are not given to talking on such occasions. A voice was heard in the distance.

"Who is that?" asked the baronet.

"The captain, Sir Paul. Dore, sir," was the answer.

In a few minutes Dore came alongside.

"All right, sir—all safe!" he exclaimed, greatly to Sir Paul's and Polly and Carry's relief. "It was hard work getting on shore; but Mr. Leeson was there and helped us. His cutter struck, and has gone to pieces. It's an island—without people or cultivation. We left the ladies sheltered under a rock, and if it wasn't for their fears about you and their sisters they'd be all right."

There was now little difficulty in getting into the boat, and Leeson and some of his men being on the watch for her on the beach, they were soon landed. The rest of the crew came on shore in another trip. No lives had been lost; that was their chief satisfaction. In other respects they were badly enough off. They had as yet no provisions, fire, or water, and the young ladies and Sir Paul had scarcely sufficient clothing to defend them from the cold.

Such coats as the men had saved were of course handed to the young ladies, and they sat huddled close together under the rock in a most unromantic manner, wishing for daylight. When at length daylight did come, the young ladies almost wished it was dark again, so terribly shocked were they as they looked at each other.

"Oh, Polly, how horrible you look!" "Oh, Fanny, what a figure!" "Oh, Carry, Carry, could you but see yourself!" were some of the exclamations uttered among them.

Still, as old Dore observed, "Very few young ladies as he knew could have better done without crinoline, hoops, or bustles, than his young missuses; that he could say."

The great point was to get dresses manufactured as soon as possible. Polly had put on a pair of seaman's trousers, for really she could not do without them. Carry had a shawl for a gown; and a sail having come on shore, it was cut into garments for her three other sisters, all of them wearing jackets and handkerchiefs rolled into turbans for head-dresses. As soon as there was sufficient light, the men went down to

the beach in the hopes of finding provisions washed on shore ; it was then seen that, though the cutter had gone to pieces, the brig was still entire. Dore, therefore, offered to go back to her at once, for when the tide again rose it was probable that she would also be knocked to pieces. He and his companions were absent for some time, but at last returned with a cask of water, some beef, biscuits, butter, tea, and other provisions, and several cooking utensils. Alas ! however, with no clothing for the young ladies. Several articles of men's dress had, meantime, washed on shore from out of the cutter, and Sir Paul appeared completely clothed in a very nautical fashion, not altogether, however, becoming his age and character. Daylight, also, showed the land in the far distance to the north and east, and it was very clear that the yachts had gone on shore on a rock in the bight of the Bay of Biscay, where it was not likely anybody would think of looking for them. However, as one boat was saved, it was agreed that she must be sent to the coast to give notice of the wrecks, and send for a vessel to take them off. Still some days might pass before this could be done, as the wind continued to increase, and there was already so much sea running that it would not be safe for the boat to cross. All hands were now busy in collecting drift-wood to light a fire, and in preparing such provisions as they had got for breakfast. The young ladies soon recovered their spirits, and insisted on spreading out the breakfast things, which consisted of three tin mugs, and a saucepan for a teapot. There was also a big kettle, and some knives and plates. A bag of potatoes were among the things washed on shore, and the cooking of some of them in the fire afforded matter of great interest.

"After all, considering the circumstances, our board is not so ill supplied," observed Jack Leeson, who was determined to make the best of everything. "At all events, there is no lack of hunger among us."

The young ladies, like sensible girls, were indeed doing ample justice to what was put before them. Breakfast was over, and the men were wandering round the rock, which was not a quarter of a mile in circumference, when Dore came back with a long face, and announced that a cross sea had come in as the tide rose, sweeping the spot where he had left the gig, and knocked her to pieces, and that the brig was already beginning to break up. This was, indeed, a serious matter. It was impossible to say how long they might have to remain without being seen, and it became a question if their provisions would hold out.

Leeson showed that he was not quite the rattlebrain he was supposed to be. He at once advised that they should calculate the amount of

provisions they had saved, and place themselves on an allowance, while search should be made for more provisions which might be washed on shore, and for any shell-fish which might be found at low tide. He suggested also that they should manufacture fishing lines and hooks, and try to catch some fish. As the brig went to pieces more things were washed out of her, and among them a couple of sails, with which a tent was rigged under the rock for the ladies. Here they were, however, in sight of a civilized country, yet to all intents and purposes no better off than they would have been on a coral island in the Pacific. At first, there was a spice of romance in the affair which kept up the Miss Pendergrasts' spirits, but by degrees they began to grow heartily tired of the style of life they had to endure.

One day their hopes of release were raised by seeing a column of smoke in the distance. It grew nearer and nearer; now it disappeared, but under it was, after a time, perceived the hull of a vessel, and farther off three sails. The wind was in their favour; they all drew near, the sea was smooth, the sun bright, the sky clear. They would, under any circumstances, have looked attractive.

"Hurra!" exclaimed Leeson, throwing up his cap with an animation which he had not exhibited for the last two or three days. "That's the *Aspasia*, and if the other three are not Chesterton's and Pepper-corne's schooner and yawl, and O'Dowdy's lugger, I'm a Dutchman."

Leeson was not a Dutchman. It would be difficult to describe the way in which the new comers were welcomed. Chesterton and Pepper-corne, on reaching Plymouth, found Halliday and O'Dowdy starting to join them, thinking that they were still in the Mediterranean. O'Dowdy had unexpectedly come into a fortune, and got out of all his difficulties. When the *Diana* and *Lady of Lyons* did not arrive, it occurred to Chesterton that Sir Paul had made some blunder with regard to his course. On examining the chart, he discovered that the course he had given him from Gibraltar would, if he sailed from Corunna, very probably bring him upon the very rock on which he had in reality been wrecked. Accordingly, he having announced his fears to the other yachtsmen, they at once agreed to sail in search of their missing friends. Their discovery and rescue, just as they had come to the end of their provisions, was the happy result of his sagacity.

Sir Paul had a long purse, so that he did not seriously feel the destruction of his brig. Leeson also looked on the wreck of his cutter as a mere trifle; the young ladies likewise considered the loss of their wardrobes of little consequence, as they had so soon to supply themselves with trousseaus.

The autumn was agreeably spent by the five young ladies in making matrimonial tours in different directions, and the next season they and their husbands were again at Cowes in their respective yachts, when the worthy old baronet, instead of getting a vessel of his own, took a cruise with each of them in turn.

It may truly be said that there are not to be found five happier yachtmen.

THE FAIR UNKNOWN;

OR, A VISION OF LOVELINESS.

CHAPTER I.

A VISION OF LOVELINESS SEEN BY A YACHTSMAN, AND THE EFFECT IT PRODUCED ON HIM.

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! And so, my dear fellow, you really have fallen in love with this little piece of perfection, whom you met on board the steamer crossing from Stoke's Bay to Ryde Pier in a voyage of twenty minutes' duration, according to the railroad time-tables and other authoritative documents, and you hadn't set eyes on her before, nor have you since, and don't know where she's gone, or who she is and what she is, except that she was well dressed, refined in her manner, had a sweet voice, and walked the plank from the steamer to the slippery steps of the pier-head, up which you stood ready to hand her, with unsurpassable grace and elegance, and that then she vanished amid the gay, and laughing, and sauntering, and health-seeking, and time-killing throng, while you went to look after her luggage, or your own, or I forgot how that was ! "

"No, no, Trounsell, you haven't got quite the right story," said Dick Everheart, on board whose schooner, the Dora, the conversation now described took place one evening as she lay becalmed midway between the Channel Islands and the Wight, while the two friends sat on deck, enjoying the primest of prime cigars, for, of course, such alone all yachtmen smoke, and some light French wine, which the wiser ones also imbibe in preference to stronger liquor, especially in the dog-days. "No, no, Jack ; I had a better opportunity of judging of her than you suppose," continued Everheart. "In the first place, I saw her on the platform at Fareham, to which station she was driven up in a very elegant open carriage by an elderly lady with a groom behind it ; then

I sat opposite to her in the carriage to Stoke's Bay—ten minutes by my watch—ha! and talked the whole time, or let her talk, and handed her out of the carriage. The way in which she rested her hand in mine on that occasion spoke volumes. I can always tell a lady in that very act alone. If she clutches at my hand as if it was a banister, and comes with a flump down on the platform, I am pretty sure that she is not of the first water. My fair unknown, on the contrary, made use of my hand, and yet scarcely touched it, and alighted on the platform as a lark, after soaring high in air to delight the upper world with its melody, pitches once more on the heathery moor from which she has risen."

"Ha! ha! ha! Dick, I cannot help laughing at your poetical similes. How can you tell that your fair unknown is not married?"

"I am certain that she is not, because I heard the groom who brought her things to the carriage call her Miss. Besides, her glove fitted to perfection, and I could see no mark of a ring under it."

"Perhaps she may have dispensed with that article," suggested Trounsell, in a tone which made Everheart very indignant.

"No; I tell you that I am as sure as I am of my existence that she is a lady in every sense of the word—by birth and education, beautiful, young, and innocent!" he exclaimed. "Dear me, what do you think has become of my eyes and judgment if I cannot tell what a woman is if I have the chance of even five minutes' conversation with her?"

"All that is granted, then. But how can you tell that she is amiable and right principled? A lady when travelling, especially when making a short trip, and there is nothing to ruffle her temper, puts on courteous manners with her elegant costume de voyage. Many a poor fellow has been awfully sold who has trusted to outward appearances on such occasions. I would not advise you to do that," said Trounsell.

"No, of course not," answered Everheart. "I only wish to find out who she is, that I may make further inquiries. If I find that I have been mistaken, I will give up the pursuit; but if I hear a favourable report, I purpose following it up with all earnestness."

"Alack! And do you really intend, my dear fellow, to give up your freedom—to turn Benedict—to marry?" cried Trounsell, in a tone of pretended commiseration.

"So I have resolved," said Everheart, firmly. "But I confess that, as I have more than once in my existence made a similar resolution, and had cause to alter my intentions, I can allow you some ground for hoping that I may, after all, be turned aside from my purpose. However, the sooner we can reach Ryde the more speedily I shall be able to bring the matter to an issue. I wish the breeze would come."

In vain, however, the two gentlemen, when they had finished their cigars, got up and whistled ; in vain the skipper and his mate did the same ; in vain the crew forward imitated their example—the sails continued to flap lazily as before against the masts, and the water to splash back from the sides, as the graceful craft rolled slowly in the swells, which rose silently ever and anon under her keel.

"What a horrid bore this is!" exclaimed the young owner of the yacht, getting up and walking the deck with impatient steps. "It would be a heavy pull for the men, or I would order the gig away, and we should reach Shanklin in a few hours. From thence I could get on to Ryde by the railway."

"And find that a breeze sprang up soon after you had left the yacht, and that she got in before you," said Trounsell. "No, no—don't leave her ; stick to the ship, whatever you do. But why don't you get a steamer ? You would never then have to complain of calms."

"A steamer ! What an unromantic idea !" said Everheart, in a tone of disgust.

"Very likely. So are turret-tower ships and iron-clads, but they use useful, notwithstanding—as far as engines of destruction can be called useful," observed Trounsell. "We may as well agree to banish romance from our ideas in this age of railways ; and, in my opinion, it must have been a most thoroughly uncomfortable thing when it did exist. I am very happy as I am with you aboard the Dora, becalmed as we are out here in mid-channel ; but if you give me my choice between a steamer and sailing-vessel, *ceteris paribus*—that is to say, companions, provisions, wines, and cigars being equal—I should, without hesitation, select the steamer ; such a craft as the Day Star, for instance, a thoroughly comfortable sea-going vessel—a little above two hundred tons I think she is. Her owner is a sensible fellow ; he wouldn't be yawning out here, as we are, and complaining of a calm."

"I'll think about it, if I ever part with the Dora," said Everheart.

"Or when you wed the fair unknown," observed Trounsell.

All that evening the calm continued. Several times during the night Dick put his head up the companion-hatch, when the answer he got was of the same tenor. "Not a hair in all the evens, sir ;" or "The wind's all up and down the mast, sir ;" or "There is a light breeze, sir, but it's just dead against us." As he lay tumbling about in his luxurious berth, he thought that he would get a steamer next season, especially if the fair unknown wished to have one. She would have a choice, for she had spoken knowingly about yachts. He was glad of that ; he should not have abided a woman who could not distinguish

between the *Alarm* or the *Arrow* and a collier or stone-barge, as was the case with some ladies he knew, who had, in consequence, been scratched off his list of desirables or possibles, not that he actually kept one, except in the tablets of his memory. At daybreak a steamer appeared in the horizon. She drew nearer and nearer; she was a yacht, but, as she showed no bunting, he could not tell what vessel she was, or he would have signalled and petitioned to be taken on board, as she was evidently bound inside the Isle of Wight, so great had become his impatience. Fortunately for yachting men of eager temperaments, calms do not last for ever, and at length a breeze sprang up, and carried the *Dora* round by St. Helen's to an anchorage off Ryde Pier.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIBES THE SEARCH MADE BY THE YACHTSMAN FOR THE VISION OF LOVELINESS, AND ITS RESULTS.

THE friends lost no time in going on shore, *via* the pier, for their letters, Everheart eagerly looking out, first round and round the centre structure, and then along its entire length, for his fair unknown. Once or twice he saw a graceful figure at a distance, and made chase only to be disappointed, and much oftener Trounsell pointed out a lady, and inquired if he was sure that that was not her. Trounsell, indeed, managed to select every variety of form, and height, and costume, till Dick nearly lost his temper.

"Well, my dear fellow," said his friend, "I only wish to ascertain what she is not like, to facilitate the search I hope to assist you in making."

"Thank you. But surely none of the females you pointed out answered in any way to the description I gave you," said Dick.

"Possibly not. But there's a lovely creature! Who can she be?" exclaimed Trounsell. "Can that be her?"

Everheart looked eagerly in the direction his friend pointed, then, without saying a word, started off at a rapid pace. He soon returned with a crestfallen look.

"Very strange," he muttered. "Wonderfully like her, yet not her. That lady did not know—evidently had never seen me before. I really think that she must be a sister or cousin. I have a great mind to watch where she goes. She may possibly lead the way to my unknown fair one."

"Come along, by all means," said Trounsell, who liked that sort of thing.

The lady in question had been talking with some acquaintances who had just come on to the pier, and she now, with a companion, passed through the gates, followed at a respectful distance by the two gentlemen, they endeavouring to look unconscious that any one was before them. They followed through several streets, and, from their anxiety not to be seen, several times very nearly missed the ladies, who at length entered the gate of a handsome villa, from which apparently a fine view of the sea towards Spithead could be obtained. Trounsell declared that the lady saw them, and turned an ill-omened frown of indignation towards them as she entered the gate. Everheart asserted that his friend was mistaken, and that he did not believe they were seen, and certainly, if seen, that the lady had not frowned or in any way expressed indignation. He carefully noted the villa, remarking that he should soon ascertain who were the inhabitants. The friends had to go to the post-office and other places, after which it was time to return on board to dinner; indeed, at that hour there was little chance of meeting the lady of whom they were in search. The next morning, at an early hour, Everheart went on shore to make inquiries respecting the inhabitants of the villa. All he could learn at the post-office was that they had been there about a fortnight, and that the name was Broadhurst.

"There are some Miss Broadhursts, I think?" said Dick.

"Yes, sir," answered his informant; "but was, of course, not inclined to be further communicative to a stranger."

Dick bethought him that at this hour tradesmen would be going to the villa for orders, and that from some of them he might gain the information so much desired. He watched two or three leaving the gate, and, as they got up to where he was standing, he inquired of each of them if they could tell him where a Mr. and Mrs. Broadhurst lived; and then, as if in doubt whether that could be the family he was in search of, he asked of whom the family consisted, and learned that there might be two Miss Broadhursts, but that there were certainly other young ladies staying with them, and that they saw a good deal of company. This was so far satisfactory, that it gave him hopes that they might have some mutual acquaintances through whom he might be introduced to them. In vain, however, he waited in the hopes of seeing some of the family leave the house. At last he rejoined his friend, and told him what he had learned.

"Which just amounts to this, my dear fellow—that, after all your trouble, you know that a family of the name of Broadhurst live in that

villa, and that a young lady you saw enter the house is something like your unknown," said Trounsell.

"Of course Dick was, as usual, vexed with his friend for speaking so plainly. He agreed, however to return to the pier. It was a fine day for sailing, and Trounsell would gladly have taken a cruise, but nothing would induce Dick to leave the pier-head. It was the day before the great day at Goodwood, but both had, when starting in life, had sufficient experience of the turf to make them keep out of temptation's way, so they had agreed to let the world go there without them. The pier was, of course, much less crowded than usual.

"She will certainly not be going to Goodwood, so I shall have a better chance of seeing her," remarked Everheart.

Crowds occasionally kept coming down or going up the pier as steamers arrived or were about to take their departure. Now and then a gay party came down in the tramway carriage to embark on board a yacht, but there was much less promenading than usual. At last the Dora's boat came to the steps for orders. Dick went down to speak to the coxswain. Just at that moment a large party got out of the carriage. Trounsell was standing watching them when Dick rejoined him. Scarcely had he done so than he started, exclaiming, "That's her! I see the difference!" and was hurrying down the steps to get on board a steamer, which lay puffing and blowing at the pier-head, when the word "Let go!" was given, and, before he could spring on board, the plank was hauled in, and the steamer's paddles began to revolve. He sung out, "I am going!" but the vessel was behind time, and the skipper would stop for no one. The steamer stood for Portsmouth. Dick was in despair.

"She may be going off by the train, Heaven knows where!" he exclaimed.

"And so do I," said Trounsell, coolly. "I heard some of the party talking of Goodwood, and, moreover, of Bognor. Depend on it they purpose sleeping at the Sussex, or some other hotel, that they may not appear in travel-stained dresses the next day."

"Had I a steamer we might catch the next train," exclaimed Dick, hurrying back to where he had left his boat.

She had shoved off, but was within hail. The friends jumped into her, and were soon on board the Dora. The schooner, in the course of a few minutes, was standing with a fair breeze for Portsmouth. Their carpet-bags were filled during the run across. Scarcely allowing time to pick a secure berth up the harbour or to furl sails, Dick ordered his gig, and pulled for the point. There was a slight delay in securing a

cab, and they arrived at the railway station just in time to see a train start for the eastward. Dick asserted that he caught sight of the unknown at one of the windows.

For nearly two hours they had to wait, Everheart boiling with impatience, Trounsell taking it coolly as usual. Bognor was reached, but no information regarding the unknown could be obtained at the Sussex. She certainly was not there ; but then she might be staying with some friends in the neighbourhood. Dick's only consolation was that he might see her on the race-course. He and his friend were there in good time the next day, in spite of the unpropitious state of the weather. Cloaks and umbrellas hid muslin gowns and gay new bonnets, and many a fair one who had anticipated a day of delight was doomed for the first part of it to suffer disappointment. This alone made poor Dick's task even more difficult than it might have been, as he wandered amid the ranks of carriages gazing at the fair occupants. What cared he that Gladiator and Regalia were not to run ? little note took he of Tourmalin, or Beelzebub, or Wildbriar, or Marksman ; or cared whether the Duke or Baron's filly was the favourite. Often he could scarcely have told, had he been asked, which race was being run. As the day advanced he became more and more anxious. The weather was gloomy, and it affected his spirits. It was sultry too, and he was hungry and tired.

"I must give it up," he said, with a sigh, to Trounsell.

Just then a voice hailed him—"Hello, Dick, come here and join us. You look as if a glass of champagne would do you good, and beg your friend to come too ; we have a supply for all comers."

The speaker was Tom Ripple, an old yachting bachelor friend, who, with a party of lady relatives and a couple of gentlemen, had come to enjoy the humours of the course more than the race itself. Dick's spirits revived wonderfully under the genial influence of wine, sandwiches, and pleasant company.

"Come, jump up here," said his entertainer from the box. "I have a word to say to you, and you will see the fun better."

Dick accepted the invitation, and was listening to a pretty broad hint from his friend that he would be wise to turn his attention to one of the very nice girls inside, when he felt his heart beat quickly, for there he saw in a carriage not many yards off the fair unknown. What his friend said he had not the remotest idea. After all, unless some mutual acquaintance could be found, he could make but little progress, as he could not, without some sufficient excuse, go up and speak to her. He had not at first noticed the style of people she was with. He now observed that they were not of the class with whom he would have ex-

pected to find her. They were evidently unrefined, jolly, good-natured people—a father and mother, three daughters, and a son. She was dressed, and looked so different to the rest of the party, that he was satisfied that she could not possibly be a near relation, if a relation at all. Ripple soon discovered that his companion was not listening to a word he was saying, and his eyes naturally turned in the direction Everheart was looking.

"Very handsome girl. I admire your taste," said Ripple.

"My dear fellow, do you know who she is?"

"I can make a guess, for I know her friends." answered Ripple. "That is old Griggs, with mother Griggs, and those are three Miss Grigges, and young Hopeful is on the box. Old Griggs is a lawyer, and a very honest one. He is staying at Ryde. I know him well. The young lady is, I suspect, a client, whose cause in an important lawsuit he has undertaken without a prospect of repayment if he is beaten. If I am right in my conjecture, her name is Broadhurst. The lawsuit is with a cousin of her father's, who has obtained possession of property which she claims, or, rather, which her friends claim for her. Three or four thousand a year depend on the result. You must have seen the case in the papers. The possessors are now staying at Ryde, I suspect; at least, I heard their names mentioned, and old Griggs, whose family are staying there, told me some days ago that they expected her to stay with them, so that the cousins would very likely meet. It is a curious case, I fancy, though at this moment I do not know the exact particulars. Depends on the validity of a will. Her father was heir-at-law of a distant relative, but a will was produced by which the present Mr. Anthony Broadhurst claimed and obtained the property. The object of Miss Ada Broadhurst, or, rather, of her guardians and friends, is to set the will aside. Griggs, who was her father's legal adviser, says that they shall succeed. I do not know Miss Ada, but I do know Mr. Anthony Broadhurst, and, knowing, do not like him. His daughters are somewhat fast girls, and handsome. Scandal says nothing against them; but they are not exactly the sort of girls from among whom a wise man would pick a wife. About Ada Broadhurst I know nothing, except her name and the particulars I have given you; and old Griggs told me that she was a very nice girl. If that is her, he is right."

"I think that must be her," said Everheart. "I say, my good fellow, introduce me at once, will you? I have seen her before. I have taken a great fancy to her. I want particularly to become acquainted with her friends."

"As you like. I shall be very happy; but, in my opinion, a bird in

the hand is worth two in the bush," answered Ripple, casting a glance over his shoulder at his fair, jolly, fat young cousins, in the carriage below him. "They have ten thousand pounds a-piece, and no drawbacks. However, I'll do what you wish, and then you'll be able to judge which you like best."

Saying this he descended from the box, followed by Everheart.

"I'll be back directly, Sarah," he said, addressing his sister. "I see some friends two carriages off, and Everheart and I are going to speak to them."

Everheart would rather have avoided this announcement, as he knew that the eyes of his friends would naturally be turned towards him while he was speaking to Miss Broadhurst. However, taking Ripple's arm, the two gentlemen strolled about for a few minutes, so as not to make the cause of the introduction too evident. Suddenly they came on the Griggs's carriage.

"Ah, my dear Griggs, how do you do, and Mrs. Griggs?" exclaimed Ripple, shaking hands. "It is an unexpected pleasure to see you. And your daughters, how de do?—how de do? And your friend, do I know her? Surely I ought to do so."

Griggs, of course, introduced Ripple, and, after the usual amount of hand-shaking with his former acquaintances, Ripple introduced Everheart to Miss Broadhurst, who, after a little hesitation, acknowledged that she had met him before, and, finally, that she had much pleasure in meeting him again. Dick found her even more intelligent, agreeable, refined, and right-minded than he had expected. He saw that she could have very little sympathy with her present companions, except that they seemed thoroughly good-natured and straightforward people. Griggs seemed also a very worthy and sensible man. Ripple left Dick still talking to his new friends, while he went back to attend to his own party. Dick found that they were all going to return to Ryde the next day.

"A bold stroke to become thoroughly intimate. I'll ask them all to return in the Dora," he thought to himself. "I can order luncheon to be ready for them by a telegram. Mason is a sharp fellow. He'll guess that I want a handsome spread, and do everything right."

Such were the thoughts which rapidly passed through Dick's brain. He lost no time in putting his ideas into execution. His offer was favourably received. Miss Broadhurst smiled, and, he thought, looked especially pleased.

"Then I shall expect you on board to-morrow after breakfast," he said. "Or it may be safer, and to save you trouble, if I were to come for you."

Griggs had no objection, nor, indeed, had Mrs. Griggs, still less the three Miss Griggses. Indeed, it was suggested that he, Mr. Everheart, and his friend Mr. Trounsell, might find it pleasant to spend the evening with them at Southsea, where they proposed sleeping. Everheart would be delighted, and he was sure his friend would be so. It was then suggested that the whole of the Ripple party should be pressed to join them. The motion was carried unanimously, and a deputation sent to invite them. Tom Ripple would rather have gone quietly on board his yacht, but his sister Sarah, though a staid dame in manners, was up to any fun, and their young cousins were decidedly in favour of accepting the Griggs's invitation. Of course they carried the day, much to Everheart's satisfaction, as he knew that the more people were collected together the less likely were any attentions he might pay to Miss Broadhurst to be remarked. The sun shone forth brightly, and his spirits rose. The chief race of the day was coming off—the Goodwood Cup, for which five horses were to run. According to the bets made around them, the Marquis of Hastings's Duke was the favourite, and next to him was Baron Rothschild's Tourmalin. Considerable was the surprise, therefore, of the unsophisticated spectators to find that, at starting, two of the other horses were taking the lead. It was like a flash of lightning—first one, then another, was passed by the Baron's horse; then the Duke was seen to put forth his powers; at a hundred yards ahead he assumed the lead. Tourmalin now went at his utmost speed to recover lost ground, but in vain. The Duke won cleverly by a length.

"After all, I prefer yacht sailing and regattas," said Everheart, when the race was over. "This is very exciting for the moment, and especially for those who understand racing; but it is too soon over. A yacht race may last for four or five hours or more, though that is longer than is desirable, I own."

"I agree with you. I infinitely prefer yacht sailing, and, were I a man possessed of sufficient fortune, should own one," said Miss Broadhurst. "I do not know, indeed, why ladies of good property should not possess yachts. It affords, at all events, an independent mode of moving from place to place, and enjoying sea air and coast scenery, with a change of society."

Of course Dick agreed with her, and hinted remotely at the pleasure a young married couple would enjoy with a fine yacht. It might have been imprudent, but he could not resist adding, "I hope that you will like the Dora when you see her. I built her for comfort rather than speed; at the same time she sails remarkably well, and is a good sea

boat. If you with your friends will consent to come, we will accompany the yachts the first race which takes place round the island, and I have hopes that we shall with a little management see the greater part, if not the whole of it."

To this proposal, also, Miss Broadhurst made no objection, and said that she should enjoy it excessively. Indeed, Dick flattered himself that he was making great progress with the fair unknown.

Just then a particularly well-dressed, tall, gentlemanly-looking man sauntered up, and, with a half bow to Griggs, and a more profound one to Mrs. Griggs and the young ladies, stopped at the carriage.

"I have been looking for you all day till this moment in vain," he said, turning his glance towards Miss Broadhurst. "I was wretched—in despair; but now I am rewarded. My feelings have been like the day—dark clouds and gloom in the morning, and now bright sunshine."

He went on for some time in the same strain. Dick from the first took a dislike to him. A nearer inspection showed that he was a thoroughly got-up old beau—an elaborately curled wig, whiskers and moustache carefully dyed. His manner was affected in the extreme. Mrs. and Miss Griggs, however, seemed to make a great deal of him, and to think him an important person. Dick could learn nothing from what he heard as to who he was. He talked of having a yacht, and appeared to be a man of fortune. Still Dick did not fancy that Miss Broadhurst received his attentions favourably. Yet he knew enough of women to be aware that they do not always exhibit their real sentiments. Title, fortune, fame, and even impudence, carry the day with some girls. Dick was not quite as happy as at first.

He heaved a sigh when Griggs ordered the horses to be put to.

"We'll meet again ere long, Mr. Everheart," said the old gentleman, as they drove off. "Very happy to make your acquaintance. At my house you'll be always welcome; remember that, pray—remember that—"

"Well, you seem to have made great way with that young lady," whispered Ripple into Dick's ear as he rejoined him. "Sweet girl; all right, I dare say. Still, if you are floored, think of my little cousins. No mistake about them, I can tell you. You see them as they are—no false colours—no thingumbobs behind—every inch of hair is their own; they don't wear bustles, I am certain—what seems—is—either forward or aft; however, I mustn't particularise."

"Thank you, my dear fellow, you needn't. I am fully convinced of the truth of your assertions. I had ample evidence, and, had not my

affections been previously engaged, I cannot say what might have been the result," answered Everheart. "However, I rather think my friend Trounsell is struck with them. I know that he is heart free. He is an excellent fellow, and is heir to a baronetcy, though at present he has not much of this world's goods."

"That will do," said the old bachelor, rubbing his hands. "Though neither Sarah nor I have married, we are not at all averse to matrimony, and are rather inclined to encourage it in the younger generation."

By this time the horses were put to. Ripple mounted the box. Everheart and Trounsell having expressed their hopes of meeting in the evening, made their bows to the ladies, and sought their own conveyance.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISION OF LOVELINESS HAVING BECOME A REALITY, AT LENGTH, TO THE YACHTSMAN'S INTENSE DELIGHT, COMES ON BOARD HIS YACHT.

EVERHEART and Trounsell reached the hotel at Southsea rather later than they had intended. Griggs had secured a good-sized room for dancing, and had made several additions to the company, for, ordinary looking as he was, he had an extensive acquaintance among the upper ten thousand of society, who had no objection to honour his well-spread board at home. The Miss Griggses, it was supposed, would have very satisfactory fortunes, and scions of noble houses were not found wanting as pretenders to their hands; but the young ladies were not tender-hearted, and old Griggs knew admirably how to manage such young gentlemen. He was not dazzled by any boasts they might make of titles *in posse*, fortunes in prospect, or advancement in their professions, if they had any. He usually finished by saying, with a soft bland kind voice, "I have a great regard for you, my dear sir. Don't speak of contingencies; that's only waste of time. Show me what you have got, and we will talk about the matter."

There were several of the class present, and, altogether, Everheart was surprised to see so large an assemblage. The man he had seen on the race-course, and who had so evidently admired Miss Broadhurst, was present. He was now engaged in paying devoted attention to Mrs. Griggs, and Dick very soon found his way up to Miss Broadhurst.

She received him in as kind a way as he could have desired. Dancing soon began. He led her out, and, as he saw her moving among the rest of the ladies present, he was more than ever struck by her superiority. At last he was obliged to quit her side, that he might dance with the Miss Ripples and the Miss Griggses, and with two other young ladies to whom Mrs. Griggs insisted on introducing him. He had the annoyance, meantime, of seeing the antiquated beau go up to Miss Broadhurst, and apparently to be paying her the most devoted attention. The Miss Ripples did not know him. At last Everheart was dancing with Miss Griggs, and he took the opportunity of inquiring, in as indifferent a tone as he could assume, who the gentleman was then dancing with Miss Broadhurst.

"What, don't you know him?" exclaimed Miss Griggs. "I thought everybody knew him. That is Sir Timothy Witherby, a delightful person—so much conversation—charming manners—knows everything, or something about everything and everybody! He is a great favourite of ours—that is, of mamma and us girls; somehow or other papa does not like him, but still he lets him come. We know very well that he has no matrimonial intentions, so we treat him quite like a married man, which is pleasant—no mistake can be made—but I must say that he seems to be very much struck with Ada Broadhurst. If he sets to work, he is sure to win her, I should think. However, I fancy that his means are limited, considering his rank and position in society, and it is very uncertain whether Ada will ever have anything beyond the small income she now possesses."

This was the most important of the information Dick obtained from the talkative young lady. He determined to prevent the baronet, fascinating as he might be, from cutting him out. Having gone through his duty dances, he again was fortunate enough to engage Miss Broadhurst. Twice Sir Timothy came up and spoke to her. Dick watched to see the way she replied; it was that of utter indifference.

"All right, Sir Timothy; I don't think that you will prove a formidable rival, at all events," he said to himself, looking complacently at the old beau, and inviting him to join the party to Ryde.

The evening, everybody agreed, passed off most pleasantly. Everheart and Trounsell hurried on board the Dora to get ready for their guests. Mason had prepared what he could on board, and ordered other dishes from the shore to form an ample and elegant luncheon. They had little more, therefore, to do than to deck the cabin devoted to the ladies with flowers, and to lay out some elegant books, and to put up some fresh hangings. Soon after breakfast they went up to the hotel

to bring off the party. Everybody was in readiness, and eager for the expedition. The day was tolerably fine, as days went this season. They were soon all safe on board—Griggses, Ripples, Sir Timothy Witherby, and three or four more gentlemen, and two ladies. Ripple's yacht, the Owl, was at Cowes undergoing some repairs, but she was to be ready that evening. He wanted to go there.

"What a pity that we should not stand on to the Needles!" observed Trounsell to one of the Miss Ripples. "I am sure that Everheart would gladly do so, if you were to ask him."

"Oh, then, we will!" cried Polly Ripple: "And we can be put on shore at Cowes on our way back."

Of course Everheart was only too delighted to retain his guests on board for as long a time as they liked to remain—at least, some of them, and for their sakes he was compelled to entertain those whose society he would have dispensed with. He did not, however, say this aloud. With the company of Sir Timothy, especially, he would gladly have been rid. The more he saw of the baronet, the less he liked him. He trusted that Miss Broadhurst would share his sentiments. He was, he suspected, one of those unprincipled roués who, with iron constitutions, infest society for the greater part of a generation, and whose long experience gives them an increased power of committing mischief with impunity. Instead of running over to Ryde, the Dora's head was put to the westward.

Everheart had requested Miss Sarah Ripple to act as hostess to the ladies.

"No, no, my dear Mr. Everheart; ask Mrs. Griggs," she answered. "She is a very worthy woman, but she is apt to be offended, and, as the eldest married lady on board, she will consider that the task ought to have been imposed on her."

Dick was obliged to follow Miss Sarah's advice, though very unwillingly.

"Dame Griggs will assume the right of being chaperone-general on all occasions," he said to himself. "However, it can't be helped. I should like to have consulted Ada first."

He had already begun to think of her by her christian name. There was a fresh breeze, and the Dora heeled over considerably, and Everheart talked of shortening sail.

"Oh! pray do not, unless it is necessary. As far as I and my friends are concerned," said Miss Broadhurst, "it cannot blow too hard for us. I enjoy nothing more than to feel a vessel tearing through the water and pitching into the seas, and rising again throwing the white

spray from her bows. Am I expressing myself with nautical correctness?" she asked, smiling.

"Oh! certainly. I am delighted to hear what you say!" answered Dick. "There is to be a race round the island next week of yachts of the Royal Yacht Squadron. Would you, if it blows fresh, like to accompany the yachts? It will be an exciting scene, and, by starting some time before them, we shall see the greater part of the race."

"I shall enjoy it excessively, however hard it may blow," she said.

The proposal was not kept a secret. The Miss Griggses volunteered to accompany their friend, but mamma Griggs evidently did not like to pledge herself; she was already getting more of the sea than she liked, and she had heard that outside of the Needles matters were often very much worse. Sir Timothy also made a face when he heard of the plan. He was already heartily wishing himself on *terra firma*, though still desirous of making himself agreeable to Miss Broadhurst. He was not likely to succeed. Nature had not intended him for a yachtsman. A sea-sick gentleman looks anything but attractive in the eyes of a lady who is herself very well, and enjoying the movement of the vessel. At length Sir Timothy fairly knocked under. He rushed to the side; he thought not of his hat, which he had before been tightly holding on—he thought not of his hyacinthine curls; a squall stronger than its predecessors struck the schooner; she yielded to its power, and heeled over gunwhale to; off flew the baronet's hat; a sea passing by with a foaming crest covered his head, and, when it emerged from the briny flood, a bald white patch alone was visible, and away floated the hat and wig, bobbing to each other in the wake of the schooner, till the latter, fully saturated, sank beneath the waves.

"Oh! my hair—my hair!" shrieked the beau baronet. "Bring it back—bring it back—stop the ship!"

"Has it blown out by the roots, then, Sir Timothy?" cried Ripple, unable to restrain his laughter.

"I fear that it is impossible to stop the ship, or to regain what you have lost!" cried Griggs.

"Oh dear—oh dear! will none of you help poor dear Sir Timothy?" cried out Mrs. Griggs, in a tone of real alarm. "He will have his head blown off next! What will become of him?"

Had Everheart ever felt any great amount of jealousy of the baronet, it would have been dissipated by the laughter which beamed forth from the eyes of Ada Broadhurst, although she did not give way to the loud cachinnations in which the Miss Ripples, and some of the rest of the party aft and all the crew forward, indulged. With some feeling

of compassion, Everheart begged the old beau to go below. Sir Timothy mutely yielded, and with eyes on the deck, not daring to meet those of others, was led down the companion-ladder to a private cabin, where hot water was brought him to perform his ablutions, and then, with his head bound up, he was left to his own reflections. It is to be doubted that they were altogether pleasant, independent of his physical sufferings. He was now too ill and wretched to speak or to care about anything, or he would have entreated that the schooner might forthwith carry him back to Ryde. When he got a little better for an interval he did think of it, but then he remembered that to go on shore in his present hairless condition, while daylight rested on the world, was utterly impossible ; so he reflected that he must of necessity endure all his sufferings till the friendly shades of night would enable him to steal to his lodgings unperceived. None of the rest of the party were ill, or at all inclined to curtail their sail. Sir Timothy and his miseries would very soon have been forgotten had they not been brought to remembrance every now and then by a sly question as to where his hat or wig then were. Some one suggested that an advertisement should be inserted in the papers, directing that, if found, they should be forwarded to him ; another proposed that paragraphs should be sent round to the local papers, begging that the friends of Sir Timothy T. would be under no alarm should his hat and wig be picked up, as the worthy baronet himself was perfectly well, they having been simply blown overboard while he was suffering from a temporary attack of sea-sickness, and leaning in the usual attitude under such circumstances over the vessel's side.

" That would be very kind, indeed," observed Mrs. Griggs, who was at no time over bright. " I am sure that he will be glad to repay you for any expense to which you may be put."

" It would be the first time he ever repaid any one who spent money on his account," muttered Griggs. " He would have been more likely to have repaid you with a bullet had duels still been allowable."

" By-the-bye, I see that Osbaldiston is dead," observed Ripple, who thought it time to turn the conversation about the baronet for the sake of Everheart, who might object to have one of his guests criticised too severely while actually on board. " What a wonderful combination of bone and muscle he must have been ! That was, indeed, a feat for a sporting man to boast of, when he rode two hundred miles within ten hours ! "

" Not on one horse, I presume ? " said Trounsell, who knew nothing of sporting matters.

"No, no ; he had an unlimited supply of horses, and bestrode twenty-eight in the course of the day," said Ripple. "For many weeks before, he galloped more than sixty miles every morning to get his muscles into order. The performance took place at the Houghton Meeting, Newmarket, in 1831, on a course of four miles, beginning and ending at the Duke's Stand. He accomplished the distance in eight hours and forty-two minutes, and pocketed one thousand eight hundred guineas. Not many people would do the thing now-a-days."

"Perhaps not ; but I will undertake to find five thousand young men of the same rank of life who will perform far greater athletic feats than the same number would have done in those days," exclaimed Everheart. "I do not acknowledge the degeneracy of the present age. Look at the rowing and cricket matches, the pedestrian tourists, the Alpine climbers, and, more than all, what our volunteers go through ! Very often wonderful geniuses even do not produce much effect on their generation, and I cannot see that a few men being able to undergo a great amount of fatigue is any advantage to their country ; still we cannot help thinking of the old squire with affectionate regard."

It was now time to stand back, and, of course, before the wind the schooner made fine weather of it, greatly to the surprise of some of the ladies unaccustomed to yachting, who could not comprehend how the wind had so suddenly dropped. As soon as they were inside Hurst Castle, with its surrounding new forts and lighthouses, Everheart ordered luncheon to be served. Everybody was very hungry, and ready to do ample justice to even a far worse repast. They made a very merry party, not even saddened by a groan which came occasionally from Sir Timothy's cabin. The Miss Ripples shone forth as jolly fast girls. The grave Trounsell was evidently very much taken with one of them, Phoebe, the second, certainly the prettiest of the sisters. They proposed dancing as soon as luncheon was over, but it was suggested that there was rather too much sea on for such a performance, as a sudden lurch to leeward might produce a somewhat serious result among the dancers. Everheart had, however, to promise them a dance the first day the weather and other circumstances would allow. Other expeditions were also planned—a sail round the island—a pic-nic at Hurst Castle, or Alum Bay, or St. Catharine—a run to Bournemouth—a visit to Netley Abbey or Beaulieu ; indeed, Everheart found that, if he yielded to the wishes of his fair acquaintances, he might spend the whole summer in carrying them about. At present, however, for the sake of Ada Broadhurst, he was very happy to promise to go wherever they wished. They were all quite surprised when, towards the evening,

the Dora hove-to off Cowes to land the Ripples. She quickly ran on to Ryde. Griggs invited Everheart and Trounsell to come up to a yacht tea. The latter had to devote himself to one of the Miss Griggses. He did his best to be entertaining, but his thoughts were elsewhere. Everheart was more deeply in love with Ada than ever. He could not venture to propose for some time, he fancied, though he thought that he knew as much about her as if he had been acquainted for years.

Most of the party were in the boats, when the steward Mason, recollecting Sir Timothy, went to his cabin, and inquired whether he would go on shore.

"Is it still daylight?" inquired the baronet.

"Oh, yes, Sir Timothy; you'll see your way quite easily along the pier," answered Mason.

"And—oh horror!—be seen—be seen!" exclaimed the wretched man. "Let me remain quiet till the shades of night come thickly down over the world, and then, my good fellow, accept a guinea, and enable me to land unperceived, and obtain a carriage to carry me to my lodgings."

Mason pocketed the guinea, nothing loath—it was the first the baronet had ever been known to give beforehand for services in prospect)—and then came on deck and announced that Sir Timothy felt himself too unwell to leave the cabin. Mrs. and the Miss Griggses were the only people who expressed any commiseration for the baronet—the rest only laughed at the announcement, and it was proposed to send him off a hairdresser with a collection of wigs, and a hatter with some hats, that he might select some fit coverings for his head. Mrs. Griggs sent him by Mason a pressing invitation for the evening, which was passed in a highly satisfactory manner, but he did not make his appearance.

CHAPTER IV.

COWES REGATTA IN 1866, AND VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH IT.

RIPPLE, or rather Miss Sarah, his sister, had invited the Griggs's girls and Ada Broadhurst to stay with them for the Cowes Regatta week, and to go to the Club Ball. In spite of the years which have rolled by of the numerous Yacht Clubs which have been established since that of

the Yacht Squadron was formed, who can say that the Cowes Regatta has in any way fallen off from its pristine glory—that its fireworks are less brilliant, or that its ball is less fashionably attended than formerly? But there were the Griggs's girls and the Ripples, and probably others, who have no claim to belong to the fashionable world. Of course there were always such, in addition to the fashionables, plenty of Griggs's girls, and no lack of jolly girls like the Ripples, whose principle is to have good consciences, to feed well, and to laugh and grow fat. In spite of the blowing weather, the Dora was every day under weigh, accompanying the racing yachts, greatly to Ada Broadhurst's delight. Several interesting races took place, but the one in which Ada felt most interest was that round the island. The strong wind, which had been blowing for some days from the westward, gave promise of a heavy sea outside the Needles. Ripple's craft, the Owl, did not get under weigh, and he and his party transferred themselves on board the Dora. She made sail about half an hour before the racing yachts, and hove to to the westward. Twenty yachts entered, of different sizes, from Lord Ponsonby's Lufra, of 205 tons, to Sir Bruce Chichester's Rosebud, of 88 tons. Nine, however, only started, and got away in the following order at half-past ten. The Lulworth to windward, and then Titania, Blue Bell, Arrow, Pantomime, Egeria, Christabel, Iolanthe, and Lufra. There they lay in a row—silent and motionless. The preparation gun fired. The crews were on the alert, though everything had long before been got ready. The signal gun at last was heard from the Castle. Up went a crowd of snowy canvas, and off started the vessels to the northward—the Lufra, having more sail to make, being the last; at the same time, once having got under weigh, she tore after her competitors. The Arrow, the same Arrow of ancient days, so renowned for her speed when owned by her builder, the late Joseph Weld, of Lulworth Castle, was the first to go about on the north shore, and was then on her starboard tack standing for Egypt. It was a dead beat down to the Needles, but every yacht was well handled and behaved well. Away they went, like a flock of sea-fowl taking flight. Over to the stiff breeze they heeled; yet, undaunted with what was before them, they held their course. Many a tack was made before they reached the Needles, and then, as they neared the rocks and got clear of Hurst point, they felt the heavy sea rolling in. It was just the day to suit a powerful yawl-rigged craft like the Lufra; her quickness in stays enabled her soon to take the lead, which she maintained throughout, followed closely by the Arrow, which, had there been less wind, might possibly have been first. It was severely trying to the sea-going

qualities of all the vessels, but especially of the smaller ones as they crossed the bridge of the Needles, and, tacking, found the lofty cliffs of Scratchel's Bay and the west side of the rocks on their port bows. High above them was seen the old Needle light-house, and close down to the water, on the outer or northern Needle rock, the new one built on a platform, formed by scarping out the rock. Scarcely a finer sea view exists on the English coast, although none but well-seasoned yachtsmen or yachting ladies could just then enjoy it. The Dora had kept well ahead of the racing yachts.

"Do you not think that you have had enough of this sea work, and would you not rather run back and meet the yachts as they come in from the other side?" asked Everheart of Ada Broadhurst.

"Oh, no, no; let us go round as they do," she said. "It is very delightful and exciting, and we shall come to no harm, I hope."

"I trust not," answered Everheart. "The Dora is a well-built craft, and her spars are all sound, and her rigging well set up. She is fit to go round the world, and to live through any gales likely to be encountered."

Whatever others might have thought, the wishes of Miss Broadhurst were paramount. The yachts were soon enabled to weather the west-end of the island, and to keep away from St. Catharine's, having then the lofty white cliffs of the back of the Needle Downs on their beam, and the opening of Freshwater-gate beyond. Far ahead appeared the tall white tower on the bold headland of St. Catharine's, off which runs a race perilous to small craft, and not pleasant even to larger vessels. The sun shone out brightly; the wind lessened, and the vessels were enabled to boom out their foresails on the starboard hand, every inch of canvas they could set drawing fully. They literally tore along through the lively water. The Arrow kept close in shore, and on her weather-beam hung the Blue Bell, a craft evidently destined to do something. Half a cable's length outside her came the Egeria, the water foaming from her bows—the three seemingly keeping equal pace with each other. The beautiful Titania came fourth; while the Pantomime, Lulworth, the little Christabel, and the Iolanthe followed. Thus they ran along the greater part of the south shore of the island, jibbing when they came off Dunnose, so as to bring their booms on their starboard side. When off Bembridge, they had to take in square-sails, and, hauling close to the wind, stood through St. Helen's Roads. Some soon went about, and continued to work along the edge of Ryde sands. Then were the Egeria, Pantomime, and Titania, followed by Lulworth and Christabel, while the Lufra, Arrow, and Blue Bell stood up through

Stoke's Bay. The Lufra went about at half-past three off Stoke's Bay pier, but the Blue Bell stood on much longer. Both then stood well over towards Ryde, and weathered all the other vessels by a considerable distance. The Arrow did not go about till off the Brambles, and, when she made her southern board, the Lufra was a long way to windward of her. The Pantomime ate the Egeria and Titania completely out of the wind, and was now fourth in the match. That the breeze was not a gentle one was shown by the veteran Lulworth having three reefs down in her mainsail. The wind, however, now falling still more, the Christabel to the westward of Ryde caught her up. From this time the wind decreased so much that several of the racing yachts got jammed by an east-going tide. The Lufra was in first, having taken exactly six hours and a quarter to go round the island, a course not often performed by a sailing vessel in so short a time. The Arrow came in next, followed in order by the Blue Bell, Pantomime, and Egeria; but as the Arrow, on account of her well-known speed, and the Lufra, on account of her great size and power, had to allow the others time, the Blue Bell took the first prize, and the Pantomime and Egeria the two others.

"It is, indeed, a beautiful sight!" exclaimed Ada Broadhurst more than once as the race continued. "I should so like to sail in a match, though what we are doing is the next best thing to it."

"I would gladly have entered had I thought so, for I fancy the Dora would have done herself credit," answered Everheart. "But I built her with the intention of going foreign, and a match like this tries a vessel's hull considerably."

"What, are you going away from England?" she asked, suddenly looking up, and then allowing her gaze to rest on the deck as if she had put the question unintentionally.

"I had thought of doing so, but I am uncertain now whether or not I shall go to a distance," he answered, looking calmly at her. "I must be guided by circumstances."

"Had you thought of going to the Mediterranean?" she asked, in a quiet tone. "There are more places of interest to visit within its confines than in any other part of the world."

"Certainly there are, but I have been there, and I had a fancy for a trip to the Pacific," said Everheart. "There are numberless romantic islands and interesting people to be seen there, especially those who have been brought out of barbarism into a state of comparative civilisation within a very short time. I speak not only of the Sandwich Islands, whose queen has lately visited England, but of numerous groups to the south—Tahiti and others. I am curious to see the dark-skinned people

of Fiji, who were till lately addicted to cannibalism, and whose king, though not behind his subjects in that unpleasant propensity, has become a civilised man, and is highly spoken of for his intelligence and many kingly qualities."

"How interesting to visit such people, so thoroughly different to any to be found on this side of the globe, I should fancy," she observed, in the same tone as before. "I should thoroughly enjoy, if I were a man, a voyage of the sort you describe."

"My difficulty was to find a companion with whom I could be certain to pull well during the time we were away, who would wish to see what I wish to see, and to go where I wish to go. Trounsell is an excellent fellow, but he is apt to be satirical; he never looks at objects through rose-coloured spectacles, and has no practical romance about him. Some people have plenty of theoretical romance. That is, they like to read a romance and talk romantically, but are sadly put out directly any romantic or inconvenient incident occurs. Others, again, and I hope that I am among them, retain the childlike power of making a hut appear a palace, and a few bits of biscuit and cheese, garnished with mustard and cress and wild flowers, a feast."

"Ah that is truly a delightful power," said Miss Broadhurst. "I believe that I also possess it in a certain degree; but much depends whether I am at the time happy and contented with the surrounding objects, animate or inanimate."

"That is, I suspect, my case, and therefore I endeavour, when I have the power, to surround myself only with those objects calculated to enlighten and enliven my mind. For a voyage which may last a couple of years or so, it is necessary to be very careful."

"Yes, it seems to me a considerable time out of a person's life," remarked Miss Broadhurst, and suddenly became silent and thoughtful.

The Dora held throughout the race a good position for seeing it; the rest of the party, in spite of two or three of them occasionally feeling a little of that stern leveller, sea-sickness, enjoyed the spectacle, and declared that they were perfectly ready to make the same trip another day. Trounsell had not been idle, but had done his best to work himself into the good graces of Phoebe Ripple; not a very difficult task, as she was not a hard-hearted damsel, and he was a fine-looking, gentlemanly, and agreeable fellow. Those who saw how things were going, foretold that the two yachtsmen would be mated before the season was much further advanced.

"If the Cowes ball doesn't do it, the Ryde will to a certainty," observed Ann Griggs to her sister Betty. "It is the best thing to happen

to Ada, whether she gets her fortune or not. Papa says that she is certain to get it ; but he is over sanguine, and Sir Timothy told me that it was looked on as a very doubtful matter."

All the party were to go to the Cowes ball, and to return to Ryde the next day. The ball was brilliant as usual, and fast young ladies talked learnedly with yachting young gentlemen of affairs nautical. Sharp-eyed policeman in plain clothes prevented the entrance of disreputable characters, and two fashionably-dressed youths, with an innocent-looking girl and a dignified lady-like mother, were politely desired, in a low whisper, to return to their hotel, and to remember that the eye of a detective was on them. The youths seemed a little inclined to bluster, but were silent on hearing " Pooh ! pooh ! I know you, my boys ! "—while the latter bowed a smiling acknowledgment of the attention shown them, and directed the coachman to drive back, as they had forgotten their tickets. To describe the guests who did get in would be impossible. The Ripples' girls were generally admired, and had no lack of partners ; the Griggses were not quite so fortunate ; but, thanks to the exertions of their friends, they had no great cause to complain.

Everheart had just danced with Miss Broadhurst, and had resigned her to Trounsell, when he saw Sir Timothy Witherby enter the room with several young ladies. A second glance assured him that one of them was the young lady whose likeness to Ada Broadhurst had struck him so forcibly, and he had no doubt that she was one of the cousins of whom Ripple had told him. Ripple at that moment joined him, and assured him that he was right in his conjectures.

" I wonder how they will meet," he said. " The Anthony Broadhursts hate our fair friend as they do poison, while she always speaks of them in the kindest manner. If left to herself, I do not believe that she would attempt to disturb them in their possessions, though Griggs says that they have not the slightest right to them."

Her cousins, however, did not go near Ada, and the room was so crowded that possibly they did not for some time even see each other. Everheart was waiting till he could again place himself by her side, when Sir Timothy Witherby came up to him. Dick shrunk with antipathy from the man. His curls had been renewed, fresh roses had been added to his cheeks ; he was exquisitely got up. His appearance was well calculated to captivate a dowager or an advanced maiden, but was such as to create a nausea in the breasts of most young girls, and to obtain the contempt, if not the disgust, of most men.

" Have not had the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Everheart, since my unfortunate cruise on board your vessel," said the baronet. " It was

not your fault that it terminated so miserably to me, but you will have the goodness not to mention the circumstance which occurred on board to any one. You understand me, Mr. Everheart?"

Dick did not at all like the tone in which the baronet spoke; it seemed as if he wished to pick a quarrel with him.

"You must remember, Sir Timothy, that there were numerous witnesses to the occurrence, and that it is not likely that they will refrain from describing it. I cannot, for the life of me, understand what you mean."

"What I mean is very clear—that you are the owner of the vessel on board which this disagreeable event occurred, and that I must make you responsible," answered the baronet.

"In other words, you are determined to find a cause of quarrel, Sir Timothy. But understand that I never quarrel with any one. I have not mentioned the incident to which you refer, and, if it is known by any but those who were present, it is not through me. Will that satisfy you?" said Everheart, who judged, perhaps not wrongly, that Sir Timothy, if not decidedly drunk, was much excited by wine.

"Of course, my dear sir—of course," answered Sir Timothy, his ideas taking another turn. "I am really obliged to you, and, to prove it, will give you a hint worth having. I see what you think of a certain young lady, a charming person, I'll allow, but she has not a sixpence, and will loose her cause—the law-suit she is engaged in—to a certainty. You know all about it, probably? There is an important link in the necessary evidence missing. Griggs has only just found it out. He is in despair, but hasn't told her, and won't, I suspect, till the last. Her cousins are charming people, only the fortune which she would have had entire will be divided among three of them. You will act as you think fit. I must return, and make myself agreeable. I had no wish to quarrel with you—of that you must be assured. I esteem you—I think you a very good fellow!"

Not having now any doubt that the baronet was decidedly drunk, Everheart was very glad to get rid of him, and to see him go back to the three Miss Broadhursts, towards whom, however, his manner seemed perfectly quiet. He could not help believing that the account Sir Timothy had given him was correct.

"So much the better," he said to himself. "I have fortune enough for both of us, and love her for herself alone."

It was some time before Ada saw her cousins. They put out their hands, and received her with far more cordiality than usual, as if they would affect to be condescending. After some time, while Everheart

was dancing with one of the Ripple girls, he saw Sir Timothy go up to Ada, and begin evidently to press her to dance. She apparently at first declined, but at length stood up with him in a quadrille. He was interesting her, it seemed, till suddenly a blush mantled on her brow and cheek; not another word did she speak, and, directly the dance was over, refusing to take his arm, she walked up to a seat next to Miss Sarah Ripple. She refused, however, to repeat what he had said. An early day had been fixed for one of the proposed pic-nics. Ripple had asked two or three friends with yachts to join, and Everheart and Trounsell had found other friends who wished to join, so that an unusually large party was made up. The ball terminated without any other incident worthy of notice.

CHAPTER V.

A PIC-NIC, AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PRINCIPAL PEOPLE CONCERNED.

The proposed pic-nic was at length arranged. Everheart, Ripple, and the owners of four other yachts, had agreed to join it. The weather had been tolerable for some time, and a propitious day was expected. As the Dora was the largest of the vessels, it was arranged, that in case of a fit spot not being reached—a not impossible contingency where winds and tides were concerned—the dinner should take place on board her. Dick could not decline the proposal, made by some thoughtless acquaintance, though he would gladly have avoided the honour. He had spent most of the day on shore with Ada Broadhurst, and had no longer any doubts as to her feelings towards him. Phœbe Ripple had been staying with the Griggses, and Trounsell was equally happy in being certain of her love. Griggs was away, especially engaged on Ada's affairs. He had acknowledged lately that matters were not going as well as he had hoped. He, however, unwilling to damp her enjoyment, had not told her so. The two friends, not having been asked to remain to dinner, had returned on board at an earlier hour than usual. It was growing dusk; they had finished their dinner, and were walking the deck, with their cigars in their mouths, talking as newly-engaged lovers are apt to talk, when an excursion steamer, which had landed some passengers at the pier, was seen standing right down for them.

"What can the fellow be about?" exclaimed Everheart. "He does not appear even to see us."

"Those on board must be drunk—toasting their passengers probably," observed Trounsell, when both the gentlemen and the watch on deck shouted out, "Starboard—starboard your helm;" the latter at the same time veering out the cable as rapidly as they could.

It was in vain. On came the steamer directly towards the bows of the Dora. She was a powerful vessel, and, having a good deal of steam on, it seemed possible that she would send the yacht to the bottom. It was an anxious moment for her owner. In another instant the steamer struck her, but fortunately the steamer's way having been stopped, and her helm put to starboard, the force of the blow was received on the stem of the Dora, whose bowsprit was carried away and her bow slightly injured. The steamer then sheered off, in spite of all the adjurations of the Dora's master and crew to her to stop and receive condign punishment. Trounsell swore a little also, but Everheart, who never swore or gave way to his temper in any unbecoming way, merely said :

"How provoking! The Dora cannot go to the pic-nic to-morrow. Long, you must do your best to get the damages made good as fast as possible."

Long, who was the master of the Dora, promised to get a new bowsprit put in without an hour's delay. The event was, however, to prove of more consequence than Dick at the moment supposed. There were four other yachts going—the Owl, the Swallow, the Evanthe, and the Leonora—so that the party made up for the Dora could easily be distributed among them. He had, of course, undertaken to receive the Griggs's party; the Ripple family, with their friends in the Owl, were to join them off Cowes. Jack Sandhurst, the owner of the Evanthe, seeing the condition of the Dora, came on board at an early hour, and requested Everheart to make use of his vessel as he felt disposed, and a polite message of the same nature came from Tom Snorum, of the Swallow. The next morning was fine, the wind was from the northward, and the yachts made sail to the westward with every prospect of a pleasant day for the company they had on board. Everheart went on board the Evanthe, which had received the Griggses and Miss Broadhurst; Trounsell hoped to get on board the Owl off Cowes. Some of the ladies had brought their work—others sketch-books, or with books to read aloud, or collections of riddles—two or three had guitars, and some of the gentlemen had various musical instruments; indeed, there was no lack of means of amusement. Just as Everheart was leaving the Dora, a letter among others was brought to him from an old friend, requesting that he would come and see him immediately where he was staying, at a small village near Milford, a little to the west of Lymington,

in Hampshire. His first impulse was to start off by steamer and rail, but he recollects that he could more easily reach the place from Hurst Beach, if he went by sea. A fine fresh breeze carried the yachts over the smooth waters of the Solent. The Owl joined them off Cowes, and the Ripples expressed much sympathy with her owner at the accident which had happened to the Dora. Trounsell kept turning sharp eyes in the direction of the Owl.

"Sandhurst, I must beg leave to send an ambassador on board the Owl, to thank our friends for their expressions of concern. Trounsell, will you undertake the office?"

"Thank you," was the answer. "I am proud of the honour."

A boat was lowered, and the envoy conveyed on board the Owl, from which, however, he showed no disposition to return, and so the boat came back without him. The wind increased considerably, and, the tide being fair, the yachts in a very short time got down to Hurst. Everheart when there desired to be put on shore, though the walk he would have to take was far from a pleasant one, begging that the Evanthe, on her return, would send a boat to take him off. Of course, Ada and Everheart were very sorry to be parted, and she promised to take care that he was not forgotten. Alum Bay had been fixed on for the pic-nic, but the wind had increased so much by the time that the yachts stood in there, blowing directly into the bay, that it was found that the landing would be very unpleasant—in fact, that all the company would have got thoroughly wet. It was, therefore, determined, after a consultation held on board the Owl, to take a cruise towards Bournemouth, and then to return and anchor inside Hurst, and either to dine on board the Ianthe, or on some sheltered spot on the beach. The proposal was considered good, and carried out, everybody enjoying the picturesque view at the entrance of the Needles when Scratchel's Bay is still open. On coming back, as the wind was still strong, and most of the party had reasons for wishing to enjoy themselves on *terra firma*, the yachts brought up, as had been proposed, on the east side of Hurst Beach. As the water there was perfectly smooth, a landing was easily effected, with provisions and plates and dishes, and some thirty or forty ladies and gentlemen dined in the attitudes of shipwrecked mariners, though on an abundance which such unfortunate people do not often enjoy. Seldom had the beach presented a gayer scene. The company laughed and talked, and made music with their voices and on their instruments. They then, as people under such circumstances are apt to do, broke up into small groups; some sat down to sketch, or meditate, or flirt, and others visited the forts and lighthouses,

Time sped rapidly on. The weather began to look less agreeable than in the first part of the day. Blue peter was hoisted as a signal for embarking, and a gun was fired from the *Evanthe* to call in all stragglers.

"Variety is pleasing!" exclaimed Tom Snorum, who was known for the blunders he occasionally made. "I vote that we shift about, and make fresh combinations of parties on board the vessels."

He had had a particularly disagreeable old dowager and a son like her, and two ugly daughters, of whom he was anxious to be rid. Jack Sandhurst was much in the same predicament with regard to some of his guests, and, not being aware of his friend's reasons for making the proposal, imprudently jumped at it.

Ripple had no objection to receive a few fresh guests on board, some of those who had come with him preferring, for various reasons, to return by the other yachts. It happened, also, that Miss Sarah Ripple, just before the party embarked, was taken ill, and had to go on board and lie down in her cabin; she, therefore, did not superintend the return of her charges, and they, again, were so well engaged with their admirers in *esse* or *posse* that they did not look after each other. The party got on board, the yachts made sail, and, with a strong breeze so far to the eastward of north that it seemed doubtful whether they could weather Cowes, stood up the Solent. They had got half a mile away from the shore, when a lady and gentleman appeared on the shingly beach, and waved, but waved in vain, to attract the notice of some on board.

It had happened that Ada Broadhurst, feeling very little taste for the fun and jokes, not always very refined, going forward, and having, moreover, matters of importance to meditate about, got up as soon as she could from before the tablecloth, and walked round the beach to the west side. She went on for some time by herself, till, tired with the walk over the rough stones, she sat down gazing across the Shingle bank, on which the sea foamed and bubbled as the tide rushed over it towards Christchurch, Bournemouth, and Swanage, on which the rays of the sun now shone brightly. Several vessels were standing through the north channel, giving life to the view. More on her left were the Needle rocks, projecting out into the sea, the lofty white cliffs and the smooth green downs above them, and the bright-coloured sands of Alum Bay to the east. She took out her sketch-book and colour-box, and began an effective drawing.

She went on interested in her work, and not considering how time sped till she heard a footstep close to her. Looking up, her heart beat

quicker—a bright smile lighted her eye. It was Everheart. Returning from Keyhaven, he had come along the west side of the beach for the sake of enjoying the view. He had an idea possibly that she would be found away from the rest of the party, for he knew that not many of them were to her taste. He sat himself down by her side. She showed him the drawing she had made. It was well worthy of the admiration he bestowed on it. Dick was somewhat impulsive. He went on from praising the drawing to praising the hand which executed it, and the mind which guided the hand ; and then he took the hand and pressed it to his lips, and entreated that it might be his, and promised to love and cherish the owner. As she did not take it away he drew her nearer to him, and pressed a kiss on her lips, and held her, with her head leaning on his shoulder, how long he could not tell.

" You do love me ? You will marry me ? " he said, at length.

" She made no reply, but burst into tears. He endeavoured to soothe and console.

" Yes, I do most sincerely, most devotedly love you, but I cannot promise to marry, though I will promise to marry no one else, because you do not know who I am or what I am. I had no intention—no wish to deceive you. It is but now that I am gradually becoming acquainted with my own history. This very evening I expect to hear more. I should have remained at home, but my kind friend desired me to join all the parties to which I am invited, and to appear as unconcerned as possible. I own that, as you were coming, I was the more unwilling to stay behind ; but it is very important that I should return to meet Mr. Griggs, who purposed being at Ryde this evening."

" Pray understand, dearest, that I love you for yourself, and that, whatever may be your birth, I still desire that you may be mine," said Everheart, imprinting a kiss on her brow.

She thanked him again and again, and then entreating him to listen to what she had to say, narrated to him a tale of sorrow and suffering, of guilt and of despair, and death, for which he certainly had in no way been prepared."

" Sad—very sad," he observed, gently ; " but to me it can matter nothing. You and all those immediately connected with you are guiltless."

" I trust so—I trust so ; but I am also almost penniless, and I have little hope of obtaining the fortune which my friends assert is rightly mine. They are sanguine, and you may have heard from them that I am an heiress, or likely to have a large fortune ; but look upon me, I

beseech you, as having nothing but my love to give you—that you have—but nothing more."

"That is all I expected—all I wish for; a rich—rich treasure," answered Everheart; and he said a great deal more with sincerity and truth, for Dick, with many a fault, was an upright, honest fellow.

He gave her love for love. As to her want of fortune, he had made up his mind that, though he might have to give up his yacht and live quietly, he would gladly do it for her sake. He said this and a great many other things, and no wonder that the time passed very delightfully and quickly away. Suddenly, Everheart remembered that they had not come in the Dora, and that they were depending on another person's yacht to carry them back to Ryde. He then looked at his watch, and thought that their friends would probably be embarking and waiting for them. The sand-banks and line of forts on the top of it completely hid the yachts from them where they were sitting. They had, however, no great distance to go across the bank to reach the place of embarkation. It is scarcely necessary to say that, waving in vain, the couple saw the yachts receding rapidly from the shore. They were neither of them people to sit down in despair, though the position in which they were left was sufficiently unpleasant. Everheart thought of all possible ways of reaching Ryde that evening. The nearest railway station on the mainland was Lymington, and they might have to walk some miles before they could get a conveyance to it. From Lymington they might get to Portsmouth, and cross to Ryde. The simplest plan seemed to be to get a boat to take them to Yarmouth, and from thence to drive to Ryde; but even in that way they could not hope to arrive till very late. Seldom have a lady and gentleman been placed in a more disagreeable dilemma. The only alternative was to procure a boat, if one was to be found, to go all the way to Ryde. It was just possible that some steamer coming in at the Needles might take them on board; but that was so very problematical that it was scarcely worthy of consideration. It seemed, indeed, likely that they would not be able to find a boat of any size to carry them. They made enquiries among all the people they could meet with at Hurst, but not a boat was forthcoming. However, at length, some one thought of Jim Woolgar's boat, if Jim could be found. Search was made for Jim Woolgar, and at last it was discovered that he was away; but his son, a boy of thirteen, tempted by Everheart's magnificent offer of a guinea, undertook to let the boat and to go in her. Everheart promised on this to send one of his men back in the boat, if no one could be found to accompany them. Search was made, but not a seaman was found at liberty to go in Jim Woolgar's boat.

"Will you trust yourself to my seamanship?" asked Everheart of Ada. "I have been accustomed to boats since my boyhood, and I do not expect with this breeze that there will be any great trial of my skill."

Of course Ada was perfectly ready to entrust herself to his care. The boat was only eighteen feet long, but in his younger days Everheart had been accustomed to sail inside the Isle of Wight in a much smaller boat, often in blowing weather. Young Jim, with the assistance of a man, soon got the Little Gull ready, and Everheart and his lady-love stepped into her, and, with the good wishes of the spectators, shoved off from the shore. The Gull had only three sails—a mainsail, foresail, and mizen. Jim asserted that she sailed like a witch, and that it must blow very hard before she required a reef in her mainsail. As the tide was in their favour, and the wind abeam, it seemed a pity not to attempt to get to Ryde, as it might be of the greatest importance for Ada to be there that evening.

"Oh yes, I am perfectly ready to make the passage in the Little Gull," said Ada; "though I confess that I should have preferred the Dora."

"Then we will keep well over on the north shore, so that, should the wind get more to the eastward, we may still weather Cowes."

The wind enabled the boat to lay up well for Jack in the Basket at the mouth of Lymington Creek; but the wind was freshening, and Everheart observed with concern that it had drawn a point more to the eastward than when they started. The yachts were still in sight ahead. There was the possibility of its being discovered that Miss Broadhurst and Mr. Everheart had been left behind, and of their returning to look for them. Still they stood on, and gradually ran the Little Gull out of sight.

"I had forgotten how slow these sort of boats are," said Everheart. "The Little Gull may be a clipper among her equals, but she seems to me to sail like a tortoise."

The boat, however, did very well, considering her size and rig. Jim had been very careful to provide a bailer, and not without reason, as Everheart soon observed, for he was constantly employed in getting rid of the water which made its way through sundry leaks into the boat, yet not in sufficient quantities to be dangerous.

"She always lets the water in on this tack, more than on t'other," observed little Jim, looking up from his occupation. "Last winter, to be sure, she went down at her moorings in the creek, but then I was ill, and not able to get aboard her, and father was away in a pilot vessel."

"Pleasant," observed Everheart, laughing, that his companion might not be alarmed. "She will not go down just now, I hope."

"Not if I keeps at it," answered Jim, again bailing away with all his might. "You see, we're used to it, and don't think anything about the matter."

As Ada was of course sitting to the windward, her feet were clear of the water, which, indeed, Jim's exertions kept very well under. Neither did she, from seeing Everheart look so calm and confident, feel any alarm. He had had the forethought to borrow a cloak from a relation of Jim's, which he had thrown over her shoulders, and also a coat, which he professed to require for himself, but which he had also devoted to her service, so that she was tolerably protected from the spray and the occasional crest of a sea which came flying over the bows. The Little Gull had got as far as midway between Pit's Deep and Leep, at the mouth of the Beaulieu River, when a heavy squall struck the boat. Jim sung out, "Luff, sir, luff." Everheart quickly put down the helm and eased off the mainsheet, or she would have been well-nigh over. Ada uttered no cry, though she turned pale, and instinctively held on by the gunwale.

"We must take a reef or two in the mainsail, Jim," said Everheart. "Haul the foresail up to windward; settle the throat. That will do."

"We will quickly have the sail reefed," he said to Ada. "There is not the slightest cause for alarm. Indeed, it is more for comfort than safety that we take in so many reefs."

While he was speaking, he and Jim were busily employed in taking in the reefs. The operation was soon performed, and the boat put on her course. Still, with the reduced sail, she heeled over very much, and the wind, as they got more to the eastward, came somewhat ahead, and compelled Everheart to keep farther from the north shore towards mid-channel, where the sea ran considerably higher. Still Cowes harbour could without difficulty be reached; but there was a stormy foam-covered sea to be first crossed. Jim, as he continued bailing, looked up every now and then anxiously in the face of the stranger, and probably wished that he had not come. Then he saw that the boat was properly handled, and his confidence returned. Ada did not speak much, but what she said was cheerful, though it was an effort to her. As the boat stood more off the land, and was exposed to a heavier sea, the foam and spray came flying more and more thickly over her. Had it not been for the two coats, Ada would have been wet through and through. Everheart was already so; but for himself he did not care.

"If we get round Old Castle Point, we shall have the wind free, and do very well. But will it not be better to put into Cowes?" he asked.

"I feel perfectly safe under your charge," she answered. "And the more I think of it, the more important do I feel it that I should be at Ryde this evening, and there must be much delay if we land at Cowes."

Everheart thought that the weather looked better just then, and agreed to continue on, though not without some misgivings. Once more the wind shifted back, so as to enable the Little Gull to keep outside Cowes Roads, where a number of vessels were brought up. There was certainly more sea, but Everheart was able to keep away, and he hoped that the wind was dropping. Still he did not like the look of the sky; the clouds flew by rapidly overhead, and those banking up in the horizon looked wild and stormy. He began to regret having passed the sheltering haven which Cowes afforded. Osborne could still be seen rising proudly over the quarter. Even now they might run back, and still reach Ryde before dark. Just then the evening gun from the men-of-war in the Roads reminded him how quickly time had sped. He held on his course. The sea was getting every moment heavier; now the boat rose on the foaming crest of a wave, now sunk into a hollow. The wind again freshened. Even yachts were standing in for their moorings with two and three reefs down. A blast stronger than ever laid the boat over, till the water rushed over her gunwale to leeward, but Everheart quickly luffed up, and she rose again. He thought of lowering the mainsail altogether, but the rapidly increasing gloom reminded him that it might be altogether dark before they got to the pier, and, in all probability, the night would be very dark indeed. This made him wish to carry sail as long as he could with any degree of safety. On went the Little Gull, careering over the waves. Again and again she heeled over gunwale-to, and Jim had to exert himself to get rid of the water, which she took in over her bows as well as to leeward. Ada sat silent and pale; well might she be alarmed, although she had perfect confidence in Everheart's seamanship. He too, and with reason, felt more anxious than he had hitherto done--a slight error in judgment, should he be too slow in letting go the main-sheet or luffing up, the boat might be upset, and she whom he loved best on earth be lost. Still, as he glanced at her pale face, so usually blooming and wreathed with smiles, he tried to cheer her.

"In less than half an hour I trust that our voyage may be over," he said, in his usual quiet voice. "The boat has hitherto behaved well, and the water she takes in is of no consequence. Jim, you see, can

easily bail it out again. The wind has not increased lately, and, if it does, we must run in under our mizen and foresail."

"She did once capsize with father and me," said Jim, looking up from his occupation; "but she had water-ballast aboard, so we swam about and righted her, and warn't much the worse, except the loss of a bacey-box and a knife. You must luff a little sooner next time she heels over as much as she did just now, or maybe she'll be playing us the same trick."

This was not a very assuring piece of information, but Everheart told Jim that he would take his advice, and be more careful in future. Jim nodded, to show that he heard the promise. That half hour was to be one full of peril. It was already blowing half a gale of wind; the tide and wind met also, and created a heavy, chopping sea, through which it was difficult to steer. A large vessel had come in from the eastward, bound apparently for Cowes or Southampton. In the thickening gloom of evening the boat did not appear to be seen, and the barque bore directly down upon her. Everheart and Jim shouted at the utmost stretch of their voices. Ada, in her terror, joined in the cry. Her voice penetrated farther than Everheart's rougher voice. The vessel got still closer; in another moment they would have been sent to the bottom, when suddenly she altered her course, her side almost touching that of the Little Gull as they passed. Everheart drew his breath more freely when he saw that the Little Gull had escaped the threatened danger. On she flew, heeling over before the fast increasing gale. Ryde Pier could be dimly seen ahead, with a number of yachts at anchor off it. Everheart pointed it out to Ada.

"Yes, I shall be thankful, I own, when we get there," she answered.

"It's coming on heavier than ever, sir," said Jim.

"Yes. Let go the peak halliards—now the throat—haul down on the sail. That will do. Now go on bailing."

These orders were rapidly given by Everheart, and quickly executed by the lad. The sail was lowered not a moment too soon; as it was, Everheart dreaded that the boat would be swamped. The pier was neared. He shouted for assistance as he approached. There was barely light remaining to make out the steps on the west side. Fortunately he was heard, and a couple of men were standing ready to assist him as he got alongside. His heart beat with thankfulness as, Ada trusting herself to his arms, he sprang with her safely up the steps. The men, who knew him, undertook to look after Jim and the Little Gull. A steamer had just come in, and the tramroad car was ready to carry up her passengers. Thankfully he placed Ada in it, and took his

seat by her side. Those who know what it is to have gone through danger with others will understand how this voyage united Everheart and Ada Broadhurst more closely than ever. Their absence had caused Ada's friends great anxiety. Old Griggs had just before got home.

"Very fortunate that you came back, Miss Ada," he said. "I want your signature to send off by to-night's post. If you agree to the offer that has been made, the matter will be settled, and you will be mistress of three thousand a year, which is, I suppose, sufficient for your wants; if not, we will fight it out, and you may come in for an income of five or six thousand, or it is just possible that you may lose it all."

Ada said that she would consult Mr. Everheart, on which Griggs gave a slight whistle and a comical look behind the young lady's back. Everheart begged her to compromise the matter, as Griggs evidently considered her wisest course. The next day Trounsell appeared, and announced the arrival of the Dora, in which he had come up from Cowes.

"You must congratulate me, my dear Everheart," he said. "I am the happiest of fellows! Phœbe Ripple has accepted me, and her father gives me five thousand pounds, and, what with my two hundred a year, and what I can make, we shall do admirably. It's fortune sufficient for any one, in my opinion."

"People have different notions of what is sufficient," thought Everheart, as he told his friend that he had won the fair unknown, and that she had, moreover, a very pretty fortune to pay for extra luxuries.

THE HEIRESSES OF BALLYBRENA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES THE HEIRESSES.

BUT Nora, dear, do you really think that they ever will come back ? After the unwarrantable, impertinent, outrageous manner they have been treated by the abominable old guardian of ours, Mr. M'Cormic, I am afraid that they will never set foot on shore here again. I don't think that I would, if I was treated in that way ; at least, I don't know what I wouldn't do."

These words were spoken by a very beautiful girl, with a soft fair skin and cheeks, on which the tint of the rose richly bloomed, and large greyish blue eyes and long silken eyelashes. Those who have travelled in Ireland must have seen many fair Hibernians of the type of which she was a very excellent specimen. Her companion and sister was not inferior to her in beauty, though the style was somewhat different. The latter, though not a decided brunette, was darker, with large flashing black eyes, which looked capable of committing a vast amount of mischief if they chose, especially when they resumed the soft and languishing expression which was natural to them, till their lovely owner was aroused by feelings of indignation or anger.

" If they care for us, as I fully believe they do, they will come back most certainly," she replied to her sister's question. " If I was a man and loved a girl, I'd go through fire and water, and earth and air, to gain her ; and do you think, Kathleen dear, that such men as Captain Radcliffe and Lieutenant Manley would be deserting us just because a pitiful, wretched, little, sneaking land-agent, who happens to be our guardian, ventures to speak to them in an impudent low manner—insulting enough, I grant, but, as they must have perceived, natural to the creature ? "

"I hope so, indeed," said Kathleen. "I am sure, if Lieutenant Manley loves me, that I shall love him; and I am nearly certain that he does love me, and I'd do a good deal to get out of the clutches of our hated guardian,"

"I don't doubt that Captain Radcliffe is deeply in love with me, for he has said as much has looked as much, and he would not venture to go as far as that if he wasn't in earnest, I should think!" exclaimed Nora, with a toss of her head. "He is as gentlemanly and pleasing a man as I have ever met, has seen a great deal of the world, and is most agreeable. His schooner, the Fauna, is a very handsome vessel, and depend on it we shall have her back before long; and the Flora will not be very far behind her. I have no doubt whatever that Mr. Manley is smitten with you, dear Kathleen, and you are worthy of him." And the warm-hearted Nora imprinted a loving kiss on her beautiful sister's cheek.

The two young ladies were standing at an open window of their residence, on the coast of the romantic and beautiful county of Wicklow, in Ireland. The house was known as Ballybrena Castle; indeed, it had originally been a strong fortress, and though altered, and added to, and partly pulled down, it still retained something of its early character. It was, indeed, a very picturesque-looking place, backed by lofty rugged mountains, their bases fringed with numerous trees and rich and varied foliage, while on either side of the castle rocks ran out for a considerable distance, forming a small bay, which afforded shelter to vessels of some size from all winds, except those from the east and south-east. Old M'Cormic, the present possessor, declared that the scenery around was for all the world, he heard, like the coast of northern Italy, barring the orange-groves, and the myrtles, and the olives, and vines, and fig-trees; but than he asserted that Wicklow itself, he had been assured, wasn't far behind paradise when Adam and Eve first took to inhabiting it, or the land of promise in its palmy days. At all events, everybody acknowledged that the scenery around Ballybrena Castle was most beautiful; the land, too, was very fine, and there were a good many broad acres attached to the estate of which Daniel M'Cormic had contrived to make himself the owner, in lieu of the former possessor, a Captain O'Halloran, of the royal navy, whose orphan daughters have just been introduced to the reader.

Daniel M'Cormic was originally agent for the Ballybrena estates, and of several other estates besides. Of the first he had managed, by some means or other not generally known to possess himself, though the Miss O'Hallorans still had a right to some funded property of con-

siderable amount. The interest of this, however, Mr. M'Cormic, in the character of their guardian, received for them, expending it, as he asserted, on their education, and latterly to repay him for their board and maintenance. He had supplied them with a fair amount of pocket-money, and had paid all their bills for dresses, so that hitherto they had not complained of him on that score, though they did not like his vulgar manners and ideas, and the way he had otherwise treated them.

Nora and Kathleen O'Halloran were sitting, as has been said, at an open window of Ballybrena Castle. Near it stood a long spy-glass on a stand. It had been their father's. Every now and then one of them rose from her seat, and applying an eye to the instrument, swept the horizon with it, where several white sails appeared glancing in the sun on the surface of the blue ocean spread out before them.

"Oh, Kathleen, Kathleen, dear! I really do believe there comes Captain Radcliffe's schooner. I am nearly certain it's her. The masts of the vessel, I see, rake like the Fauna's, and the square topsail is just like hers. She is standing this way—do, do look!" cried Nora; though, after she had invited her sister to look, she showed no inclination to quit the glass.

At length, however, she yielded her place to Kathleen, who agreed with her in thinking that the schooner was the Fauna, and that she was standing for the bay. She could not help expressing her disappointment at the non-appearance of the Flora.

"You said, Nora, that you were sure, if Mr. Manley loved me, that he would return; and here comes the Fauna and no Flora," she said, in a tone almost as if she was reproaching her sister.

While, however, Kathleen was speaking, Nora returned to the glass, when she observed the Fauna put down her helm, come to the wind, and haul up her foresail; the square topsail was furled and the main-tack triced up. There she lay, though scarcely noticed from the shore by the naked eye, yet seen through a powerful telescope looking like a graceful swan floating on the water.

"She is waiting for something, that is very certain," observed Nora. And then she added, in a lively tone, "And what do you think, Kathleen dear, if it should be for the Flora? The two friends are very likely to have made an arrangement to meet off here, and I hope it may be so."

"Indeed, I hope so too," said Kathleen; "and, what is more, Nora dear, I am very nearly certain of it. I don't think that Mr. Manley would let Captain Radcliffe come back to see you without himself coming to see me."

The conversation of the two girls was interrupted by the sound of the opening door. They instinctively sank back into their seats, for they knew the footstep. A middle, or rather an undersized, wide-shouldered, keen-eyed person advanced in years, with a yellow scratch wig, broad features, and a turn-up nose, habited in a brown suit, entered the room. In the colour of his skin, in his restless look, shambling gait, in every line and lineament of the man, there was something unprepossessing. It was surprising that he had succeeded as he had done in making his way in the world; yet he well knew how on proper occasions to be obsequious, deferential, and humble, and even to be pious and charitable. Many people, therefore, had trusted him. Captain O'Halloran had put perfect confidence in his honesty and sterling integrity, and always spoke of him as that worthy rough diamond Dan M'Cormic, and on his death-bed in a foreign land, shot down when fighting his country's battles, left everything to his care, including his two young daughters. Dan chuckled when the announcement of his former patron's death reached him, and muttered to himself, lifting up his hand:

"Well, faith, a good character is of value, of very considerable value after all. I wish that I could do a little more to retain it. However, it will matter less when I have once secured the whole of the wealth on which I can now lawfully lay my hands; ay, that's it, lawfully—it's a great thing. People are not nearly so particular as to what rich men do, and more especially what rich men have done in days gone by; the end sanctifies the means, as the Jesuits say, and they are right in the eyes of the world, always provided and except the means are not brought too prominently forward. Ha, ha, ha!" And Dan M'Cormic rubbed his hands with glee at the thoughts of the amount of wealth he hoped soon to make his own.

"Your servant, young ladies," said Mr. M'Cormic in a harsh voice, as he shuffled into the room. "I have come to announce that two gentleman have called on you to pay their respects. They are both eligible, honourable, and respectable persons, or I would not speak in their favour or allow them to come here. They are in the drawing-room, and await your appearance with impatience."

"Oh, then, are we to go down and make ourselves agreeable?" asked Nora, who generally took the lead, in a scornful tone.

"If it so please you, young ladies," said Mr. M'Cormic, with an obsequious bow, which told them at once that he had something to gain.

"What are the means of the gentlemen in question?" asked Nora, neither she nor her sister rising from their seats.

"The one is my most estimable and excellent nephew, the son of a darling sister, Mat Honan, and the other is the son of an old friend, and I am sure that Mr. Patrick Veitch is a most estimable young man. He is under the guardianship of my worthy brother, Father Peter M'Cormic. Peter and I, you know, differ in our religious opinions. I, in my early days, became a Protestant, and Peter stuck to the old faith, and became a priest. However, I must beg that you will come down, young ladies, and treat my young friends with all courtesy."

Nora and Kathleen had no excuse for declining to go down, and as they had no particular disinclination to see young gentlemen in general, and had rather a curiosity to become acquainted with these too much-lauded heroes, they followed their guardian into the drawing-room. As the door opened there was a movement in the room, but when the young ladies entered they found two personages seated in arm-chairs with their legs stretched out, one sucking the huge nob of his walking-cane, the other assiduously whipping his boots, apparently unconscious that any one was present. The first was dressed in the roughest squireen fashion, with a green coat and brass buttons, a flashy waist-coat and a still more flashy necktie, a white hat, breeches, and top-boots; while the other, as if to present a contrast to him, had on an unimpeachable suit of black, with a white tie, shining black hat, and polished boots. Though they both bore a striking resemblance to M'Cormic, so the Miss Hallorans declared, they were neither of them ill-looking exactly, he of the flash waistcoat especially being a fine specimen of broad-shouldered humanity. They started from their seats as the ladies entered, apparently completely taken by surprise, while M'Cormic in a fussy manner commenced the ceremony of a first introduction. The Miss O'Hallorans bowed stiffly, and took their seats as far off from the gentlemen as the arrangement of the furniture would allow.

"My nephew, Mr. Matthew Honan," said M'Cormic, pointing to the gentleman in black, who thereon bowed low, with one hand on his heart, while with the other he gave a nervous flourish of his shining hat, and drew back his polished boots with a swing and a kick up behind.

"Your obedient servant, Miss Nora, for it's you I'm to——"

He began, then stopped, feeling that he had committed himself; but, notwithstanding, the impudent, familiar glance he gave at Nora, brought the rich colour into her cheeks. She might, in her indignation, possibly have replied, had not his loving uncle come to his aid and introduced Mr. Patrick Veitch, who made his first obeisance to Kathleen,

at once showing that she was destined to receive his future attentions. He exactly imitated the motions of his companion with greater vehemence, giving a still more impudent and self-confident glance at Kathleen. She tried to freeze him by a formal bow as she passed on to a seat, but he was utterly incapable of comprehending any sign of the sort. On the contrary, he seemed to think that he had come there to make himself agreeable, and had no doubt that he should succeed.

"This is a lovely place ye inhabit, Miss Kathleen, and the country around it is lovely, and some of the people that are in it are lovely sure," he observed, looking half up with a leer to observe how his remarks were taken.

Kathleen maintained the serenity of her countenance, and replied, as if no compliment had been paid.

"Indeed, Mr. Patrick Veitch, there are many persons besides yourself of the opinion that this is, indeed, a very lovely spot, though it is possible for very disagreeable as well as lovely people to come into it."

"Ah now, that's a severe remark of yours, Miss Kathleen. Sure, now, somebody has been coming here to annoy you. Just let me find them out, and I'll take good care that they never set foot on these shores."

"Thank you, Mr. Veitch; whenever I require your services, depend on it that I'll let you know," answered Kathleen, becoming aware that, with all her woman's wit and cleverness, she was not likely to silence the tongue of an impudent Irish squireen, or put the animal to shame.

Nora, meantime, had been doing her best to foil the more insinuating attentions of Mr. Matthew Honan, whose compliments, however, were scarcely less broad or more refined. Neither of the men would probably have appeared so offensive to them had they not come with the most barefaced intention of winning their affections. Backed by old M'Cormic, the two young men persevered in their attentions—or rather, they sat on and talked away at the ladies in spite of the very short answers they received. At length Nora, to cut the matter short, declared that she had a headache, and Kathleen excused herself for leaving the room by saying that she must attend on her sister.

"Beg her to get well as fast as she can, Kathleen, dear, for my young friends have promised to stay to dinner, and it will be a bitter disappointment to my nephew if she is absent," said old M'Cormic, as she was about to close the door. Unconsciously, Kathleen gave the door a harder pull than usual, and it slammed loudly. She heard her guardian's "whew!" followed by a hoarse laugh from his young friends. She stopped to hear no more.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCES THE YACHTSMEN WHO HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE HEIRESSES, IN WHICH ALSO ARE NARRATED SOME HIGHLY SCANDALOUS STORIES.

A FINE schooner yacht lay hove-to off the coast of the romantic county of Wicklow. Her owner, Captain Percy Radcliffe, walked the deck with a spy-glass, for which he found plenty of employment, in his hand. Now and then he turned towards the entrance of Ballybrena Bay, on the shores of which Ballybrena Castle could be distinguished, backed by ranges of mountains rising one beyond the other, and becoming less and less distinct, till the more distant were lost in the blue of the clear sky; now he swept the semicircle of the horizon with it to the eastward, and directed it up and down the coast north and south. No vessel passing near could easily have escaped his scrutiny. After a little time he was joined by another gentleman—an old brother officer, Major Gascoyne, who, being on sick leave, had lately joined him for a few weeks' yachting. Gascoyne had always acted the part of the "Fidus Achates" to the somewhat impetuous and headstrong Percy Radcliffe, and had proved a wise councillor and friend.

"Well, Percy, any sign of the Flora yet?" he asked. "I thought that Manley would have been the first on the ground."

"Not a cutter in sight like her," answered Captain Radcliffe. "I suspect that he has been delayed at Holyhead, where he was to take his old messmate, Tom Burton, on board, and he is so good-natured a fellow, that if anybody else offered to join him he would wait for them. However, as he has already that jolly fellow Harry Cockle with him, he hasn't room for many more, so that I hope he will join us before to-morrow night at farthest. He and I are both equally anxious to bring matters with old M'Cormic to an issue. Neither of us are affected by his insolence more than we should be by that of a cab-driver who had made an overcharge we might refuse to pay, but for the sake of the girls we must act discreetly. I have made up my mind to win Nora if I can, and Jack Manley is as determined to marry Kathleen, though what the young ladies may have to say to us we neither of us know. All we can tell is, that old M'Cormic has determined that if he can prevent us we shall not carry off his wards."

While Radcliffe was speaking, Gascoyne took the telescope from his

hands, and pointing it to the north-east, exclaimed, "There is a cutter, but whether standing this way or not I am not sure."

In a short time Radcliffe pronounced the cutter in sight, and which was evidently standing towards them to be the Flora, an opinion in which his master, Mr. Derrick, shared.

"And what course do you propose following?" asked Gascoyne.

"Stand openly into the bay and anchor off the castle," answered Radcliffe. "Old M'Cormic was away when we were off this in our yachts, and he only knows me in the character of a soldier officer, as he called me, quartered in Dublin, and believes that Manley belongs to the receiving-ship at Kingstown, so that the appearance of the yachts will not excite his suspicions. At the time I speak of, we did not bring up in the bay at all, but used to stand in towards dusk, and take up our quarters at the inn. Sometimes we met the young ladies out walking in the evening; sometimes they took a moonlight ride, when we managed to join them. Very pleasant and romantic, though not quite in accordance with the notions of propriety entertained by the generality of English girls. But commend me to a true-hearted, simple-minded Irish girl; she does all sorts of extravagant things from the very exuberance of her spirits, her innocence all the time being her greatest safeguard."

"And were those moonlight rides and evening walks all the opportunities you enjoyed of becoming acquainted with these young ladies whom you propose to make your wives?" asked Gascoyne, who had some strong notions as to the qualifications a man should seek in a wife.

"Oh no, we met several times in Dublin, where they were staying for a short time last winter, not at all according to old M'Cormic's wishes, I suspect," answered Radcliffe. "They had of course numerous admirers, but Manley and I got the ear of an old nurse and duenna of theirs, Honor O'Flaharty, and she helped us ahead with the young ladies. She loves and prizes them as the apple of her eye, and I firmly believe that she favoured us simply because, after all the inquiries she could make, she came to the conclusion that we were the most eligible of the candidates who had appeared. Again, I believe that if there is a human being she cordially hates and distrusts it is Dan M'Cormic, though she wisely conceals her feelings. She knows the opinion we hold of him, and is on that account more favourably disposed towards us."

"But supposing this Mr. M'Cormic happens to be at Ballybrena, how do you propose keeping up a communication with your fair friends?" asked Gascoyne.

"Pleasant," observed Everheart, laughing, that his companion might not be alarmed. "She will not go down just now, I hope."

"Not if I keeps at it," answered Jim, again bailing away with all his might. "You see, we're used to it, and don't think anything about the matter."

As Ada was of course sitting to the windward, her feet were clear of the water, which, indeed, Jim's exertions kept very well under. Neither did she, from seeing Everheart look so calm and confident, feel any alarm. He had had the forethought to borrow a cloak from a relation of Jim's, which he had thrown over her shoulders, and also a coat, which he professed to require for himself, but which he had also devoted to her service, so that she was tolerably protected from the spray and the occasional crest of a sea which came flying over the bows. The Little Gull had got as far as midway between Pit's Deep and Leep, at the mouth of the Beaulieu River, when a heavy squall struck the boat. Jim sung out, "Luff, sir, luff." Everheart quickly put down the helm and eased off the mainsheet, or she would have been well-nigh over. Ada uttered no cry, though she turned pale, and instinctively held on by the gunwale.

"We must take a reef or two in the mainsail, Jim," said Everheart. "Haul the foresail up to windward; settle the throat. That will do."

"We will quickly have the sail reefed," he said to Ada. "There is not the slightest cause for alarm. Indeed, it is more for comfort than safety that we take in so many reefs."

While he was speaking, he and Jim were busily employed in taking in the reefs. The operation was soon performed, and the boat put on her course. Still, with the reduced sail, she heeled over very much, and the wind, as they got more to the eastward, came somewhat ahead, and compelled Everheart to keep farther from the north shore towards mid-channel, where the sea ran considerably higher. Still Cowes harbour could without difficulty be reached; but there was a stormy foam-covered sea to be first crossed. Jim, as he continued bailing, looked up every now and then anxiously in the face of the stranger, and probably wished that he had not come. Then he saw that the boat was properly handled, and his confidence returned. Ada did not speak much, but what she said was cheerful, though it was an effort to her. As the boat stood more off the land, and was exposed to a heavier sea, the foam and spray came flying more and more thickly over her. Had it not been for the two coats, Ada would have been wet through and through. Everheart was already so; but for himself he did not care.

"If we get round Old Castle Point, we shall have the wind free, and do very well. But will it not be better to put into Cowes?" he asked.

"I feel perfectly safe under your charge," she answered. "And the more I think of it, the more important do I feel it that I should be at Ryde this evening, and there must be much delay if we land at Cowes."

Everheart thought that the weather looked better just then, and agreed to continue on, though not without some misgivings. Once more the wind shifted back, so as to enable the Little Gull to keep outside Cowes Roads, where a number of vessels were brought up. There was certainly more sea, but Everheart was able to keep away, and he hoped that the wind was dropping. Still he did not like the look of the sky; the clouds flew by rapidly overhead, and those banking up in the horizon looked wild and stormy. He began to regret having passed the sheltering haven which Cowes afforded. Osborne could still be seen rising proudly over the quarter. Even now they might run back, and still reach Ryde before dark. Just then the evening gun from the men-of-war in the Roads reminded him how quickly time had sped. He held on his course. The sea was getting every moment heavier; now the boat rose on the foaming crest of a wave, now sunk into a hollow. The wind again freshened. Even yachts were standing in for their moorings with two and three reefs down. A blast stronger than ever laid the boat over, till the water rushed over her gunwale to leeward, but Everheart quickly luffed up, and she rose again. He thought of lowering the mainsail altogether, but the rapidly increasing gloom reminded him that it might be altogether dark before they got to the pier, and, in all probability, the night would be very dark indeed. This made him wish to carry sail as long as he could with any degree of safety. On went the Little Gull, careering over the waves. Again and again she heeled over gunwale-to, and Jim had to exert himself to get rid of the water, which she took in over her bows as well as to leeward. Ada sat silent and pale; well might she be alarmed, although she had perfect confidence in Everheart's seamanship. He too, and with reason, felt more anxious than he had hitherto done--a slight error in judgment, should he be too slow in letting go the main-sheet or luffing up, the boat might be upset, and she whom he loved best on earth be lost. Still, as he glanced at her pale face, so usually blooming and wreathed with smiles, he tried to cheer her.

"In less than half an hour I trust that our voyage may be over," he said, in his usual quiet voice. "The boat has hitherto behaved well, and the water she takes in is of no consequence. Jim, you see, can

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shrine was ordered to close his shop. At that juncture three English milords appeared to gaze with gaping mouths and open eyes at the wonderful image. Reverently they bowed before it, exhibiting far more respect and devotion than had even the most ignorant of the Spanish peasants. The happy thought occurred to the priest that he would endeavour to dispose of his prize to these pious foreigners. He approached the subject very carefully. The Rev. Augustine Chasuble could scarcely believe his senses when he found that he might himself become possessed of the wonderful image, to set up in the church of which he was the fortunate priest. His Spanish brother quickly took the measure of the man with whom he had to deal, and, adding legend upon legend, raised his price. Noodle Mopus found the funds, and the wonderful image was secured. If they had done nothing else, they had at all events secured an image to assist them in making known and exemplifying to the minds of the vulgar the mysteries and beauties of the Catholic faith. Their prize was carefully placed in a box. They reached England. It was necessary to examine the chest over which they kept such careful watch at the Custom House. Thistlewell happened to be there when the figure was unpacked. The Custom House officer took it out of the box and set it up on its feet. Directly he did so, Thistlewell recognised his old friend, the figure-head of the Diana, which he had especially remarked on the day she was launched. The sculptor had intended to represent the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians, with her crescent moon and the tulip, sacred to her, in her hand. It is not surprising that the poor Spanish peasants should not have discovered the imposition of the cunning old priest; but it is remarkable that three Oxford graduates—for Mopus, goose as he is, took his degree—should have been so taken in."

"As to that, there is no folly or amount of credulity of which these twisted-minded gentlemen are not capable," observed Counsellor Lukin, with an expression of contempt. "The other day a youth, not a mere boy, told me that he supposed heaven was something like a large flower-show, in which people walked about in eucharistic garments chanting verses out of hymns ancient and modern, swinging censers, and flourishing banners. I asked him where he had got the notion, and he assured me that his priest—save the mark!—had described it to him, and told him that that was the reason it was so necessary to introduce all those sort of things into churches that people might learn all about heaven, and wish to go there."

"I can corroborate all you say, counsellor," observed Harry Cockle. "These fellows, too, twist and distort Scripture with the ingenuity of

practised Jesuits to suit their purpose. The silly laymen and women I can excuse ; but these priests, as they call themselves, these clergymen, should forthwith be sent about their business, and not allowed, under the guise of Protestant ministers, to instruct people in all the worst errors of Rome."

"Two lights, one above another, in a window at the south-east end of the castle, sir," said Ned Long, the captain of the Flora, as he made his appearance, hat in hand, at the door of the cabin.

"Thank you, Long. Man the gig at once," said Manley, rising from his seat. "You will excuse us, gentlemen, for a short time. Radcliffe and I are anxious to ascertain how the coast lies, and, as we cannot hope for a long interview with the ladies, we shall be back shortly."

The Flora's gig was soon gliding rapidly through the water towards Ballybrena Castle, with Captain Radcliffe and Manley on board. The moon shone brightly on the water of the bay, just rippled over with the remainder of the breeze which had brought the two vessels into the harbour. The walls of the old castle stood up against the sky, all modern innovations and architectural incongruities no longer perceptible, while beyond it were seen the outline of the woods and ranges of picturesque mountains, which formed the back of the landscape. The boat soon reached the beach at some distance from the regular landing-place, and the two yachtsmen quickly leaped on shore. They looked eagerly about. It was a question whether Nora and Kathleen would venture down to meet them. They hoped so, for they could scarcely themselves venture up to the castle, lest Mr. M'Cormic should be informed of their arrival. However, they soon had the satisfaction of seeing two female figures coming from the direction of the castle towards the beach.

"That must be Kathleen, by her graceful figure," said Manley.

"The other must be Nora, by her active step," observed Radcliffe.

The gentlemen hurried on. They were not mistaken. Nora was the first to speak.

"We have come to meet you that we might assure you of our annoyance and regret at the way you were treated by Mr. M'Cormic when you last came to the castle. You will believe that he spoke as he did in direct opposition to our wishes."

"Oh! we would have done anything rather than have you so treated," put in Kathleen.

The gentlemen thanked them for their kind feelings.

"Yes, you'll find that we Irish have warm hearts, Mr. Manley, in spite of what other faults we may possess," whispered Kathleen.

"And the English faithful and true ones," said the sailor. "If you would take mine into your keeping, you would find it so." And he took her hand and pressed it warmly.

"Exchange is no robbery, and I am no thief," she answered, not withdrawing her hand. "If you wish to give me yours, there's mine in return."

What Lieutenant Manley said it matters little, but certain it is that he took her in his arms, and pressed her unresistingly to the heart which she had so frankly accepted. The example was contagious, for Radcliffe and Nora seemed to have come as speedily to an equally satisfactory understanding. Some time was spent in very pleasant exchange of sentiments between the young couples. The yachtmen learned that old M'Cormic had only that evening been suddenly summoned away—where, the ladies could not tell—but that as soon as he had gone they had made the signal agreed on. Naturally, as they sat on the rocks, enjoying the moonlight on the water, time flew by far more rapidly than they supposed. They might have remained longer, in spite of the impatience of the gig's crew, who wanted to get their supper, and who employed the interval in speculating on the cause which took their young master and his friend on shore, but, as they were in the middle of a very interesting conversation, footsteps were heard approaching. Manley, not to be taken by surprise, looked out beyond the rock, when he observed a female hurrying towards them. The woman came on still faster when she saw him.

"It is our old nurse, and now our most sage and careful duenna, Honor O'Flaharty," said Nora, also looking out beyond the rock. "I am afraid that something is amiss to make her hurry out after us."

"Oh! Nora, Kathleen, dears, come away—come away!" she exclaimed, when she came up to them. "Old M'Cormic has come back with two or three ill-looking boys in his company, and maybe if he found that you were out he might be doing or saying something unpleasant."

"We'll go with you, dear Honor; and thank you for the warning," said Nora. "And, nurse, let us introduce our future husbands to you."

"You have won jewels, let me tell you, gentlemen, and prize them and cherish them as such, and, if you do, may an old woman's blessing ever rest on your and yours!" said Nurse O'Flaharty, as the young men shook her cordially by the hand.

They accompanied her and her charges a short distance towards the castle, when she forbade them to go farther lest they might be seen by any of the inmates. Lingered till they thought that the ladies were

safe within the castle, the yachtsmen at length returned on board. The mild carouse on board the Flora was over, and, though their return roused up their guests, who were eager to know what had occurred, the latter very soon retired to their respective berths.

CHAPTER III.

THE MODE DESCRIBED BY WHICH TWO OF THE PRETENDERS TO THE HANDS OF THE HEIRESSES HOPED TO GAIN THEIR OBJECT.

THE reception those two worthy gentlemen, Mr. Matthew Honan and Mr. Patrick Veitch, had met with from the Miss O'Hallorans had not been on the whole, they could not help confessing to themselves, particularly encouraging. Still, backed by so powerful an ally as Mr. M'Cormic, they resolved to persevere. The ladies had appeared at dinner, but had treated them with the most scornful indifference during the meal, and when addressed had replied in the most laconic manner. The two suitors took this treatment in very different ways. Veitch, like a true ruffian as he was, swore with many a fierce oath that he would be revenged on Kate O'Halloran if she thus continued to receive his advances. He knew who would assist him, and, in spite of all her pride, Kathleen should be his, and with thanks, too, into the bargain. Matthew Honan merely smiled and rubbed his hands, and said that he hoped time and gentle persuasion would change Miss Nora's sentiments; though when Veitch talked of carrying them off, and making them marry whether they would or not, he merely smiled more blandly, and said that he should have no objection, but would prefer leaving the management of the affair in his companion's hands.

"The first person to consult is Mother Calliday. You know her, Honan; she's a wise woman, and is certain to give good advice," said Veitch. "Then I'll just give Father M'Cormic a hint, and, though he wouldn't like to be brought in before the matter is undertaken, he would have no objection to make things all straight afterwards for the girls' sake and ours, you see."

This conversation took place as the two worthies were returning on horseback after their dinner at the castle to a farm some six miles off, of which Mr. Veitch was the nominal owner, it being, however, the property of Mr. Dan M'Cormic. Not far off dwelt the Rev. Peter M'Cormic—or Father M'Cormic, as he was more familiarly called—the parish priest of the village. As long as Pat Veitch could remember,

Father M'Cormic had taken a warm interest in his proceedings, had taught him to read, had sent him to school, and had started him in life—indeed, people did insinuate that there was a strong resemblance between the two. Arrived at the farm, they passed some hours in discussing their plans and in drinking whisky-and-water. Veitch proposed visiting Mother Calliday the first thing in the morning, for it was then too late to enable him to find his way up to her abode in the mountains. Honan declined accompanying him, alleging that, as he had resolved to follow his example whatever that might be, the visit of one was quite sufficient for their purpose, and less likely to excite observation. The next morning by daybreak Pat Veitch took his way on horseback up the mountain towards the abode of the prophetess. The exterior was like any other ordinary Irish hut; the interior, however, was very different. There was a decent-looking bed, a table, an arm-chair, a chest of drawers, and several other pieces of furniture at one end of the hut, near the fireplace, while the rest of the space was occupied by a curiously heterogeneous collection of articles—stuffed beasts, and fish, and birds, and there were some huge volumes, and a globe, and some astronomical and other scientific instruments, and some curious pictures, and maps, and diagrams—articles, however, which a very cursory inspection showed were intended rather to astonish the ignorant than for any actual use. The occupant, a tall, dark, sallow woman, whose age it would have been difficult to determine, though certainly she was far from old. Her long black hair hung over her shoulders, a band of red cloth bound round her brow preventing it from falling over her eyes, a dark serge gown, reaching from her neck to the ground, and secured round her waist by a leathern belt, was her only outer garment. Early as it was, she was found standing at the door of her hut as her visitor rode up.

"And what brings you here at this time of the morning, Patrick Veitch? Is it money ye want, or advice, or do ye bring a message from his reverence Father Peter M'Cormic?" she asked, in a sarcastic tone.

"I neither come for money, nor do I bring a message from any one, mother, but it's counsel and advice I want, and your help to gain a rich and handsome wife," answered young Veitch. "You'll not refuse me in this matter?"

"Come in, then, and let me have time to consult the spirits you know of, who attend when I call them. It's they will give you the advice you want, not I," answered the prophetess.

"I'll go in, mother, as soon as I have tied up my horse, and I'll sit down, but don't be after talking to me of familiar spirits and such-like

blarney. I know you to be a wise woman, and to have my interests at heart, and I want you to tell me how I can best make Kathleen O'Halloran my wife, and get possession of her property," said Veitch, as, having fastened his horse to a post, he entered the hut, and flung himself into the arm-chair. The woman looked at him with a curious expression of admiration, if not of affection.

" You're a bold lad, and I'll serve you if I can," she answered. " It will be no fault of mine if Kathleen O'Halloran is not your wife before a week is over; and mind you, Patrick Veitch, Father M'Cormic is to perform the ceremony. Tell him it's my will—I bind him to it."

" That I will, mother, sure enough," answered Veitch. " But the bird is first to be trapped. How is that to be done ? "

" With your daring and Mat Honan's cunning there can be no difficulty," answered Mother Calliday. " Have a couple of strong, fresh horses in readiness, entice them out of the castle, then up with them before you, throw cloaks over their heads, and away with them here or to some other place we will fix on, and then and there Father M'Cormic may be—will be—welcomed by all parties. As you two are Catholics, you see, it will be all right, and the girls can have their own Protestant weddings in public afterwards."

Many other plans were discussed, and details were entered into by the pretended prophetess and the young man, till the latter declared that he must be gone to fulfil some engagements he had made for the day. The woman watched him as he rode down the hill, muttering to herself,

" It will be truly pleasant to see a daughter of Frank O'Halloran, he who so proudly scorned my love, wed with the son of Mona Veitch and the priest M'Cormic. Patrick little dreams all this time that I am his mother. It is as well that he should not at present. I may find a fitting time for telling him, though. I think, too, if Frank O'Halloran were to rise from his grave he would be little less pleased to see his other daughter, the proud Nora, wedded to a sneaking hypocrite like Mat Honan, and his property in the clutches of Dan M'Cormic. Ha, ha, ha! there is little doubt that I at length shall have obtained the revenge I have longed for. What will the sweet Miss Kathleen say when she has to call me mother? It's a dangerous thing to scorn the love of a strong-willed woman."

With such-like pleasant reflections, Mother Calliday—or rather Mona Veitch—re-entered her hut.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEIRESSES' GUARDIAN EXHIBITS HIMSELF IN GLOWING COLOURS,
AND A NEW ADMIRER APPEARS ON THE STAGE.

WHEN Mr. Daniel M'Cormic had been summoned from home on the evening on which the Flora and Fauna anchored in Ballybrena Bay, it was to meet a gentleman on business of importance—no less, indeed, than the sale of the Ballybrena estate. The fact was that M'Cormic did not feel altogether comfortable with regard to the title by which he held it, however regular according to law it might have seemed to be. Once out of his possession, there would exist, he thought, a smaller chance of its being disputed, and, at all events, he should hold a *quid pro quo* in the shape of hard cash, of which it would be no easy matter to dispossess him, he knew.

The proposed purchaser was a certain yachting baronet, Sir Michael Molloy, who had succeeded unexpectedly to the title and a large amount of funded property, some of which he was anxious to invest in land. Hearing that there were ladies at the castle, he had refrained going on there for fear of intruding on them, he said, and had accordingly sent the message which had brought Mr. M'Cormic to him. The preliminaries of the sale were soon settled, and as the baronet was assured that the young ladies would be most happy to see him, he agreed to accompany M'Cormic to the castle instead of remaining by himself at the inn. Dan understood the art of entertaining his guests as well as any Irish gentlemen of the old school. A substantial supper was quickly spread, with an abundance of wine, and the young ladies, warned by Honor O'Flaharty, returned in time to do the honours of it, little dreaming of the plot prepared by their conscientious guardian to turn them out of their home. Sir Michael, though a middle-aged gentleman, was a bachelor, and a warm admirer of female beauty. Middle-aged gentlemen are apt to prefer the youngest wives they can find. Sir Michael was no exception to the rule, and before the evening was over he had determined to ask Kathleen O'Halloran to marry him, and to remain "possessor of the castle of her ancestors. He had not the slightest doubt of his success, and this gave a complacency to his manner and a readiness to agree to the terms proposed by Dan M'Cormic, which was highly satisfactory to that worthy gentleman. He awoke early, and, on looking forth from his window, was somewhat surprised to find two yachts, a cutter, and a schooner anchored in the bay;

still more so when he saw a variety of flags hoisted up and down to the masthead of the cutter. It was clear that they were signalising to some one on shore; but to whom was the question.

Sir Michael knew enough of the matter to discover that the signals were answered, but on that side of the house he could see no flagstaff with which the conversation could have been carried on. He dressed as soon as he could, intending to take a turn round the property before breakfast. He walked on for some time, well pleased with all he saw, till his eye fell on a boat coming from the yachts towards the shore. At the same time there emerged from the castle two females, who were, he had little doubt, the Miss O'Hallorans. After walking for some distance to the south, now lost to sight, now again in view, they went down to the beach to the spot towards which the boat was steering. Curious as he was to ascertain who the parties were, he could not approach nearer without running a considerable risk of being seen. Had he known the locality better, he would have had little difficulty in getting close up to the place without being observed, but as it was he managed to lose the road, and then to find himself in a wooded valley, where he could see nothing, and by the time he got back to the castle he saw the yachts under weigh standing out of the bay. He half-expected not to see the Miss O'Hallorans at breakfast, but they came in looking bright and smiling, and spoke quite openly of having enjoyed a delightful walk by the sea in the fresh air of the morning. It was not till he was alone with M'Cormic after breakfast that he mentioned the visit of the boats to the shore.

As it happened, rumours had been brought to that gentleman of Fenian meetings in the neighbourhood, and as he very well knew that he should be a loser if they succeeded, he was nervously anxious on the subject. In every gentleman stranger he saw a Fenian officer in disguise, in every working man out of employment a private. He had heard of the appearance of these yachts before in the harbour; he had seen them leaving it that morning, and not suspecting the true cause of their coming, he took it into his head that they were vessels employed by the Fenians, and expressed his opinion to Sir Michael. The baronet eagerly jumped at the idea. He was one of those persons who delight in finding mare's nests.

"Just it, M'Cormic; shouldn't be at all surprised. They must be put down," he answered. "I'll be back in Dublin and give notice to the government. It will be a grand thing if I was to capture them myself. I'll be after them in the Phoenix. Ship a couple or four guns, maybe, and a dozen or twenty fresh hands, and I should be sure to

capture them. I should be rendering good service to the government, and may be rewarded with a peerage eh ! I'll do it—I'll do it ! ”

With this resolution, in which he was warmly encouraged by M'Cormic, the baronet hurried back to Dublin.

Dan M'Cormic was rather glad to get rid of him. The sale of the estate he considered as secure, but he was rather puzzled to know how to manage in respect to his very evident admiration of Kathleen. He had promised her to his unacknowledged nephew, Patrick Veitch, as a recompense for certain important services rendered by that gentleman, and the said Mr. Patrick Veitch was not a person he would willingly offend, though, at the same time, he might possibly have had it in his power to hang him, or rather, to get him transported for life ; yet, on the other hand, such a proceeding would have been distasteful to his brother, the Rev. Peter M'Cormic, the said Patrick's father.

Still, as he could not help acknowledging that Sir Michael, although a goose, was the best match by a very long way for the poor girl, if it did not militate against his own interests, he should prefer forwarding it by his influence. He determined, therefore, to keep Sir Michael in play as long as he could, in the hopes that something would turn up to enable him to get rid of his promise to young Veitch. He little suspected that, while he was plotting so cleverly, an enemy had taken up his quarters close to him who would most probably bring to naught all his schemes, and that the quiet-looking stranger who was living at the village inn was no other than the famous Counsellor Lukin, a man whom he had especially to dread. In the mean time, the baronet hurried back to Dublin, big with the possession of the important information he had obtained. Should he immediately give it to the naval commanding officer on the station ? If he did, he should lose the credit of successfully carrying out the enterprise as he proposed. The Phoenix was a fine schooner, with a harum-scarum, though cleverish fellow, Timothy Ryan, who had formerly been a master's mate in the navy, as master. He had managed, for some of his ultra-eccentricities, to get dismissed the service, though no stain as to his moral character was attached to him. When Tim Ryan heard the account of the Fenians hovering on the coast, and about to make a descent on some parts of the country, though he did not believe it, as he thought some fun might be got out of it, he resolved to humour his master.

“ No time to be lost, Captain Ryan,” said Sir Michael, as he walked up and down the deck of his vessel in Kingstown Harbour. “ Ship a dozen stout fellows, or twenty if you like—the more complete daredevils the better—and the guns as heavy as we can carry ; four twelve-

pounder cannonades, or long nines, eh ?—two of each, perhaps—and don't forget plenty of powder and shot and arms for the men, cutlasses and pistols and muskets; we can exercise them as we go down."

" Ay, ay, Sir Michael," answered Tim Ryan, chuckling. " I suppose that we shall be acting legally, and have full right to capture the vessels if we find that they are armed, or landing armed men to oppose the authority of her Majesty the Queen ? "

" Of course—of course. I have ascertained all that. The country is in a state of siege, you see. The Habeas Corpus Act is suspended; that means, I take it, that if we catch a rogue we may hang him, so of course we have the right to capture these fellows, though, for my part, I shall be happy to let alone the hanging."

" Of course—of course, Sir Michael. I see that your reasoning is most complete and clear, and I have no further hesitation about the matter," observed Tim Ryan. " However, if it is possible, it may be as well to ascertain first the whereabouts of these gentlemen. It is not likely that they will remain long where you saw them."

" Not so sure of that," answered Sir Michael. " It is an unguarded bay, and a convenient place for landing. However, to make sure, I will run down again to Ballybrena, and learn more about the matter."

Sir Michael was glad of an excuse for paying another visit to the fair Kathleen. He thought that he had made some way with her, and he hoped to make more with a further acquaintance. Mr. Dan M'Cormic was anything but pleased to see him, but prudently concealed his annoyance, while the young ladies, considering his title and fortune, treated him with wonderful indifference. They were polite and hospitable, and did the honours of the house properly, but no more. Still his admiration for Kathleen increased more and more, and he determined to make his proposals on the first favourable opportunity.

The inquiries he instituted with regard to the strange vessels which had appeared in the harbour greatly increased his suspicions as to their character. They had several times been seen off the coast, each time making signals, and once had re-entered the bay, and brought up for a few hours. A suspicious person had also landed from one of them, though he had pretended to have come by the train, and he had been very busy in making inquiries of all sorts in the neighbourhood. Altogether, it seemed probable that Sir Michael's mare's nest would really have some eggs in it. With the information he had collected he hurried back to Kingstown, and went on board his yacht, which her master had got nearly ready for the proposed enterprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUITOR'S PLOTS AND TREACHERY. THE HEIRESSES UNDERTAKE
A RASH EXPEDITION, AND FIND THEMSELVES IN A FEARFUL PRE-
DICAMENT.

OTHERS besides Sir Michael Molloy entertained the idea that the two vessels which had been of late hovering off the coast belonged to the Fenian brotherhood. Among those who did so were Mr. Mat Honan and Pat Veitch. Although neither honour nor patriotism would have stood in their way, they were both too cunning and cautious to connect themselves with that fraternity of knaves and ignorant fools. Several attempts had been made to win over Veitch, but he had always managed to slip out of the trap laid for him. Impressed with this idea of the character of the strangers, he set to work to discover what he could about them, that he might be able to betray them to the government, and gain some credit, if not a more substantial reward. He endeavoured to ingratiate himself with those he knew to be Fenians, that he might gain from them the information he wished for. Though he obtained nothing from them, he learned more than he had expected—namely, that the supposed Fenian officers were keeping up a communication with the ladies at Ballybrena Castle. Several times a boat had come on shore directly after dusk, and the ladies had been observed going down to that part of the beach. They had remained there till the boat had once more pulled out to sea. This information greatly aroused the jealousy of Pat Veitch, though he still remained under the impression that the strangers were Fenians. It made him resolve no longer to delay putting into execution his scheme of carrying off Nora and Kathleen O'Halloran, and then of giving information to the government, under the belief that the so doing would be placed to his credit against any blame which might attach to him in the execution of his first project. He therefore immediately summoned Mat Honan, and begged Father M'Cormic to be in readiness to unite them to their intended brides. The chief difficulty they conceived to be overcome was the first step in their proceeding—how to entice their victims beyond the protection of their house. The poor girls once in their power, all the rest appeared easy. Honan and Veitch sat eagerly discussing the matter over their whiskey-toddy and cigars. If they sent a messenger, saying that some one in distress wished to see them, they would probably come accompanied by Honor O'Flaharty, or by some of the servants.

"Say that some of the gentlemen from the strange vessels wish to see them," suggested Veitch.

"They might cross-question the messenger, and suspect some trick," observed Honan.

"If we were to invite them to come out and take a walk in the evening, sure they wouldn't refuse," said Veitch.

"Indeed would they," answered Honan. "No, no; if we can't hit on some better plan than that, we must just give up the matter and lose our wives."

However, neither of the worthies were men likely to abandon thus easily a plan which must prove, if successful, so beneficial to themselves. The two Miss O'Hallorans were seated in their boudoir looking out for the appearance of the yachts which they had expected in that evening; but not a breath of air disturbed the calm surface of the bay, and it was very evident that, unless a breeze should spring up, the vessels could not come in at the time they hoped to see them. Still, very naturally, one after the other jumped up to look through the telescope, in the hopes of discovering the vessels themselves, or some sign of a breeze in the offing. The sea, however, remained very calm, and shining, and beautiful, but very unsatisfactory. Those who live on that coast lose the spectacle of the sun descending on a clear evening, like a vast globe of liquid fire, into his ocean bed, and spreading a fulgence over one half of the concave sky. The young ladies watched and watched, till the shades of night crept slowly upward, about to shroud the world underneath their dark canopy. Again and again they went to the telescope.

"Yes, yes, there is a white sail in the horizon!" cried Kathleen. "I see it clearly, though if I had not been looking for it I should have thought it but the wing of some sea-fowl wending its way homeward. And there is another—the schooner and cutter, depend on it."

Nora placed her eye to the glass, and agreed with her sister that the tiny white specks she saw must be the topsails of the yacht, with the last gleams of day reflected on them; but the increasing darkness soon shut them out from their sight. Though it had become too dark to work or read, they were still lingering at the window, when a servant entered to say that a lad had called desiring particularly to see them, and that he would give his message to no one else. The servant said that he was a decent sort of lad; they desired that he might be sent up to them. A nice, intelligent-looking boy, of about thirteen, far from meanly dressed, soon presented himself. He looked cautiously around to ascertain that no one was listening, and then in a low voice, putting

up his fingers to his mouth, said, "It's myself has been sent to tell you something which it's right you should know, and it's just this: I am, please your ladyships, the son of the landlord of the O'Kelly Arms, down at Kilrun—sure you know the place well enough. Last night—yes, it was—a lady came to our house—a real beautiful lady—and she said she was coming on here; but she was took ill all of a sudden, and she has been getting worse and worse ever since. We make out that she is the wife of a gentlemen—or, maybe, that's not quite it; but he has a fine big yacht, and has been coming here pretty often lately, unbeknown to Mr. Dan McCormic, your ladyships' guardian, and she thinks he wants to marry one of you, and she, do you see, wishes to warn you against him. So I was to ask you to come away and see her as fast as you can on horseback, or on foot, and I will show you the way, for I am thinking that you'll not find it otherwise."

This message was delivered with so perfect an air of sincerity, that the Miss O'Hallorans had no reason to doubt the truth of what he had said. Their feelings as they heard the dreadful tale can better be imagined than described. They both, however, retained their composure in a wonderful manner. They asked the distance to the O'Kelly Arms, for it was an inn which they did not recollect. The boy replied that it was not three miles off; but as Irish miles are of a very uncertain length, it was much farther than he wished to walk, on a dark night especially. Although there was no moon, the stars were bright, and they agreed that, as there was no difficulty in riding there, they would go over and visit the poor lady, and ascertain the truth of the story, taking Tim Tagart, their groom, as an escort. The boy said that he knew every inch of the road, and would easily keep ahead of their horses if he had a good start. He accordingly ran off, saying that he would wait for them about a mile and a half off, at a spot where they could leave the high road. Honor O'Flaharty tried to dissuade them from going at that hour of the evening; but go they must, they insisted, and promised not to delay, hoping to be back in an hour. Had there been a moon, they would have made nothing of going twice the distance, as far as the ride was concerned. The horses were brought to the door; they were quickly habited and followed by Tim; they set off at a fast trot, eager to gain the information the unknown lady had to give. They did not pull rein till they reached the spot where the boy had promised to meet them. He was there on the watch.

"This way, my ladies—this way!" he cried out, darting down a lane to the right.

At that moment Tim's horse, which was close behind them, shied

right across the road at something he saw in the hedge, and came down on his knees. Tim, who was an active fellow, was up again in a moment, and was in the saddle almost as quickly as the animal was on his legs. Luckily he was so, for at the same moment a blow was aimed at his head with a heavy bludgeon, which he narrowly escaped by digging his spurs into his horse's flanks. Bewildered for the moment, he could not tell in which direction his young mistresses had gone, but several shrieks, growing fainter and fainter, told him too truly that some act of violence was being perpetrated. He was going to follow in the direction from whence the shrieks came; but as he was about to turn down the lane, a voice shouted, "Go that way, and you are a dead man!"

It is not surprising that he should have hesitated to execute his first purpose. He did, therefore, the best he could, turned his horse's head, and galloped back as fast as he could to the castle to give notice of what had occurred.

CHAPTER VI.

THE YACHTSMEN, BY A WONDERFUL COINCIDENCE, HEAR OF THE DANGER TO WHICH THE HEIRESSES ARE EXPOSED, AND HASTEN TO THEIR RESCUE.

"For my part, Radcliffe, I am determined not to allow this state of affairs to continue longer," exclaimed Manley, who had just come on board the Fauna, as she and the Flora lay becalmed in the Irish Channel in sight of the Wicklow Mountains, but dropping down with the tide to the southward. "If M'Cormic will not give his consent, we must run the risk of losing any part of their fortunes he can withhold, and if they are willing to go, as they appear to be, carry them off in spite of him."

"With all my heart," said Radcliffe. "I am perfectly ready to run the risk of losing any part of the property that old scoundrel can lay his gripe on; at the same time that it will be a satisfaction when they become our wives to make him disgorge, if we can; and I think you and I together, with the help of Counsellor Lukin, may cause him to feel very uncomfortable on that score."

"I am glad you are of my mind. What say you, then—suppose they are willing to go away to-night or to-morrow morning—shall we clinch the matter at once? We should, with a good breeze, get across before

the end of the canonical hours the next day—eh ? ” Manley was the last speaker.

“ With all my heart,” answered Radcliffe. “ I am afraid if we do not that old M’Cormic will be playing us some trick. However, we shall know more about him as soon as we get the counsellor on board again. He told me that he should be ready to come off with us the next time we put into the bay ; so that if we can manage to get into harbour at a decent hour, I will send up to his inn and bring him on board.”

Never did yachtsmen more eagerly look out for a breeze than did the two owners of the Flora and Fauna. At length they lost patience. Though no power they possessed could take their yachts into the bay, they might themselves get there before dark.

“ The owners of steam-yachts have some sense. They can never be subject to such an annoyance as this,” exclaimed Manley.

“ Except when short of coals,” observed Radcliffe.

“ However, let us go in with the gigs,” said Manley. “ If we are to bring off Lukin, we shall require both of them, and as we do not know what tricks old M’Cormic may be up to, it will be as well if we arm our men. Of course we must take care not to infringe the laws ; but if, as I think it possible, we are attacked, we shall, at all events, be able to defend ourselves.”

The proposed arrangements were quickly made, the gigs were manned, the masters received orders to stand in after them as soon as the wind would enable them to do so, and the guests were advised to make themselves happy as well as they could. Stout arms and willing hearts urged the two light gigs through the water at a rapid rate. They calculated that they should reach the shore at dusk. One messenger was at once to be sent off to Counsellor Lukin, and another to Honor O’Flaharty, with a note for the Miss O’Hallorans. If Dan M’Cormic was away, they proposed calling openly at the castle and inviting the young ladies to walk out with them ; if he was there, it would be necessary to proceed with more caution. They reached the shore at the exact time they expected, and immediately sent off two of the men with the messages. They had not waited long before a female figure was seen hurrying down to the boat, and, breathless with running, Honor O’Flaharty came up to them, followed closely by Tim the groom, mounted, with a couple of led horses.

“ It’s the young ladies have been treacherously beguiled out of their home, and set upon and abducted and carried off, and I know not what ! ” exclaimed the faithful nurse, almost frantic with grief. “ But I know who has done it, as sure as I am a living woman—the two nephews of

Dan M'Cormic. Tim knows the way they've gone. Even now, if you make speed, you may overtake them. Old as I am, I'll be after you, if you'll let some of your men accompany me."

No time was lost in asking further questions. Manley and Radcliffe threw themselves on the horses Tim had brought, and, directing four of their men to put themselves under Honor O'Flaharty's orders, told the groom to lead the way. Tim, who was much attached to his young mistresses, needed not to be told to put his horse to its utmost speed. The stones flew from their steeds' hoofs amid flashes of light as the three horsemen, at a headlong rate, galloped along the road.

"To the right, jintlemen," cried Tim suddenly. "And look out for an enemy, for it's just hear I near got a clout on my head, which would have finished me."

However, the road was not guarded, and the party pressed on without interruption. Tim knew the road well, and, following Honor O'Flaharty's directions, led the way towards Pat Veitch's farm. She had, without a moment's hesitation, declared that he and Mat Honan were the authors of the outrage, instigated, very likely, by Dan M'Cormic himself.

With feelings more easily conceived than described, the two gentlemen dashed on. Not for a moment did the thought of breaking their own necks or their horses' knees stop them as they galloped into the darkness—now and then, as the trees overhung the road, literally not being able to see beyond their horses' heads. Tim's steed, if not Tim himself, seemed to know the way, and kept in the middle of the road, and they continued to follow at his heels. Tim was evidently a clever fellow, and his wits were sharpened by his desire to save his young mistresses and to retrieve his own character, which he felt had been damaged by his desertion of them. He began to slacken his speed.

"Hist! hist!" he cried. "Sure I hear their horses' hoofs! Pull rein for one blessed moment, jintlemen! I thought so. Now there's a path across the fields to the farm, with one or two hedges maybe, but there are gaps in them, and by following it we may get to the farm first. Over this way to the left. If we get there first the game is ours, for we can be out upon them and knock them over just as they think that all is safe."

"Oh, Tim! on then!" said the gentlemen, in a breath; and in another instant they were dashing along cross meadows, and through standing corn and barley, and over potato-fields, every now and then Tim's voice warning them what they were to expect—now a gap—now a ditch—now a stone wall. Sometimes Tim forced his way right through

a hedge, the hardy steeds, well accustomed to the country and to follow where one led, never for an instant hesitating, and always alighting on their feet. At length a light appeared ahead.

"That's the house," said Tim, turning round. "They're still on the road. Hark! Yes, it's all right. There are some rows of thick bushes close to the gates; we can take post behind them, and pounce out as the villains come by. No time to lose, or they'll be after hearing us. This way—this way!"

They soon reached the spot Tim had selected for the ambush. It well suited their object, as, while the bushes were thick enough to conceal the horses in the night, there was nothing to prevent them from springing out in an instant into the centre of the road. They had scarcely taken their posts, Radcliffe on one side and Manley and Tim on the other, and arranged their plan of operations, than the sound of horses' hoofs was heard coming rapidly along over the hard road. The gentlemen were to secure the ladies, and Tim was to hit away as hard as he could at the heads of the two villains till he had knocked them over. Radcliffe was to give the word to sally forth. They had not long to wait. Onward came the ruffians and their victims. Not a word was spoken. Radcliffe saw that the young ladies were on their own horses. "Now!" he shouted; and as he sprang out, aimed a blow at Mat Honan's head, which knocked that worthy clean off his horse. He then seized Nora's bridle, which he released from the grasp of the fallen villain. Manley at the same moment treated Veitch much in the same manner, but the ruffian, quickly recovering himself, aimed a blow, which would have fallen on Kathleen had not her horse at that moment sprung aside; while Tim the next instant, however, came down on him, as he had been directed, with a blow which completely settled him for the moment. The young ladies were, their deliverers found, secured to their horses with their arms fastened behind them, and, what was still more atrocious, with gags in their mouths, so that it had been impossible for them to cry out for assistance. Their gratitude to their deliverers, and the way they expressed it, may easily be conceived. Though still trembling with the alarm and agitation they had gone through, they expressed themselves anxious to re-mount their horses and gallop back again as fast as they had come. They stated, also, that several men had assisted Honan and Veitch in binding them, who would probably, if encountered again, attack them.

"Stop but a minute, gentlemen, till I catch these spalpeens' horses!" cried Tim, as they were about to move on, "or, do ye see, they'll be up again and be after doing us some bitter mischief in revenge, unless

you'll just let me kill them outright. The world will be well rid of them, to my mind."

As the latter part of Tim's proposal was not quite in accordance with the notions of the gentlemen, they waited till he had caught the two horses, and then they once more directed their course towards Ballybrena. The young ladies kept up their courage with wonderful spirit, though unable to do more than give a very brief account of the outrage to which they had been subjected. They had gone about a mile, when they came suddenly on a party of men drawn up across the road. Tim's presence of mind did not desert him. Guessing who they were, he shouted out,

"Arrah, now! will he dare to withstand the Queen's officers in the execution of their duty? Charge, boys, and let them feel the steel."

Radcliffe and Manley taking the hint—the one having Nora's rein, the other Kathleen's—dashed on, followed by Tim and his two led horses, and broke through the men before the latter had time to recover from their surprise. They rallied, however, immediately, and pursued in hot haste. At that moment Tim's led horses, recognising probably the voices of some friends among the men, grew restive, and greatly retarded him. He, however, would not let go their reins, and would very likely have been overtaken, but just as his enemies were up with him, a shout was heard ahead, and directly afterwards several men appeared, crying out his name. He at once recognised them as the yachtsmen, and, hailing them as friends, he turned with them and charged the ruffians. The latter, seeing that nothing was to be gained by fighting took to their heels, and made their escape over the hedges, so that, when the yachtsmen came up, none of them were to be found. Honor O'Flaharty had come all the way with the yachtsmen, and now nearly fainted in the arms of her fair charges. As, however, there was no further necessity for speed, she was mounted on one of the horses captured by Tim, and the whole party proceeded at a walking pace towards Ballybrena.

What was next to be done, was the question. Radcliffe told Nora, and Manley intimated the same to Kathleen, that they had intended entreating them to settle the matter forthwith by going across in the yachts to a village in Wales, where all arrangements had been made for the marriage.

"After the service you have rendered us, we have no right, nor have we the wish, to deny you any reasonable request you may make," answered Nora.

"And you think this a reasonable request, dearest?" asked Radcliffe.

"Undoubtedly, very reasonable indeed," answered Nora, quickly. "The truth is that, although we cannot suppose Mr. M'Cormic cognisant of the outrage his nephews have attempted, still we cannot say what steps he may take to compel us to conform to his wishes; we should be much safer with husbands as our rightful protectors."

Kathleen said that Nora had exactly expressed her sentiments.

Before they entered the castle, Honor O'Flaharty went in to ascertain whether or not Mr. M'Cormic had come back. She soon returned with the information that he was expected that very evening. This decided the question. Honor's advice was asked, and, fortunately, she agreed with the young couple, that it was the only safe course they could pursue. It is just possible that, had she advised them to remain at Ballybrena, they might still have followed their own wishes. People are apt to do so under such circumstances. She, however, not only advised them to go, but offered to accompany them. The seamen remained outside the house to carry off the boxes which the ladies and their duenna hurried in to pack up. Never did so systematic a running away take place, except when once a complaisant mamma accompanied her daughter, whom she had never been accustomed to thwart, and who insisted on running away with a young gentleman of fortune. It is to be doubted whether the boxes were particularly well stowed. They were not very heavy, and Tim and Honor managed to get them down stairs without being observed by the other servants. They were thence quickly conveyed to the boats. The young ladies and Honor followed. Tim would like to have gone also, but his love for his horses prevailed over every other consideration.

"Now," he exclaimed, "the poor beasts, they'd be after going without their hay, and their corn, and their water! No, I'll just stay and be ready to welcome the young mistresses when they come back from the marrying. Bad luck to auld M'Cormic, that he wouldn't let the fun come off here!"

On reaching the boats they found Counsellor Lukin, who had been detained packing up his papers, quietly seated in one of them, having received their message, and little dreaming of what had taken place. On hearing that, in spite of the risk the ladies had run, no harm had really occurred, he chuckled greatly.

"Well, if you have made up your minds to run away, I'll not baulk you," he whispered in Radcliffe's ear. "But, to tell you the truth, you might save yourselves the trouble, for I have got my thumb

so completely on old Dan, that he'll not venture to interfere with you."

Radcliffe whispered something in return, and the counsellor replied, in the same low voice :

" Oh ! yes, I can understand your reasons. Save a great deal of trouble, and all that sort of thing. Well, well, I was once young myself. Nothing like the present moment—ha, ha, ha ! I can sympathise with you."

" Shove off !" cried Manley. And the two boats began their swift course through the calm waters of the starlit bay.

The counsellor said he heard the wheels of Dan M'Cormic's carriage approaching the castle, and amused himself by speculating on the rage and disappointment the old rogue would feel on finding his two caged birds flown.

CHAPTER VII.

A FENIAN EXPEDITION INTERRUPTED, AND THE ADVENTURES OF THE HEIRESSES AND THE YACHTSMEN BROUGHT TO A HAPPY CON- CLUSION.

It was considerably past midnight before the boats reached the spot where it was expected that the yachts would be found, but they were nowhere to be seen. Here was a dilemma for the two yachtsmen. To have brought the ladies out into the middle of the Irish Channel, and to have no vessel to receive them ! Every one had been so engaged after they got on shore, that nobody had noticed how the wind had been since then ; the general opinion, however, was that it had been very light, or that a perfect calm had prevailed for most of the time, in which case, as the tide had been running during that time, the yachts must have drifted to the northward. Accordingly, in that direction the two yachtsmen resolved to steer, keeping a bright look-out on either hand for their vessels. The young ladies, meantime, endeavoured to assure them that they were not in the slightest degree put out, and felt perfectly happy and secure with them.

" Very well for you, young ladies," observed the counsellor, who had overheard some of the tender expressions uttered by his fair companions ; " but I, as a middle-aged gentleman in delicate health, consider it a very great misfortune. Think how my voice may be affected by the damps of evening—think of the loss of my night's rest; and then, to be

honest with you, I came away without my supper, and am very hungry. May I ask, did you take any supper before you came away? No. And you really don't feel hungry? How very extraordinary! Now, I do recollect, the same thing occurred to me once. It was a long time ago though; yes, it was the evening before my marriage-day. I was off my feed; the only time in my life I was in that unhappy condition. I don't mean going to be married, but off my feed. Made up for it, however, the next morning. Could have eaten a grilled bridesmaid if she had been well served up, marched to church like a hero, and exhibited a wonderful amount of courage and self-possession, so I was assured."

Thus the good-humoured counsellor ran on, drawing the attention of his friends off from themselves, and the inconvenience they were suffering. Then he told an amusing story. Mat offered to sing a merry song, which he began, but broke down, confessing that he had no notion of the tune, or, indeed, of any other tune except that of which the old cow died. It is extraordinary what nonsense sensible, clever men will condescend to talk under such circumstances, thereby showing their sense, for fools don't see that there is a time to be wise and a time to be foolish, and are always attempting to be what they are not. Manley now ordered the crew to lay on their oars, as there was no object to be gained by going farther to the north, as the yachts would be certain to return with the tide. Soon after this, suddenly there appeared close to them, it seemed, a bright blue light, bringing into sparkling clearness the spars and rigging and sails of a schooner; and while it was still burning, another burst forth at a short distance, exhibiting the cutter in the same manner.

"Fauna, ahoy!" shouted Radcliffe.

"Flora, ahoy!" cried Manley.

And the answers which came down to them over the smooth water showed them that the two vessels were the yachts of which they were in search. In a few more minutes the party were on board the Fauna, which, being the largest and most commodious of the two yachts, had been selected to convey the two ladies and their attendant across the channel. Of course the yachtmen were warmly welcomed and congratulated by Gascoyne and their other friends, and the counsellor did ample justice to the supper, with which the table was speedily spread. The fickle wind, however, still refused to blow, and the yachts accordingly kept floating helplessly southward with the tide. Morning soon dawned. Before the sun rose, a dark line in the northern horizon showed that a breeze might be expected in that quarter. The two lovers were early on deck, eagerly watching for the coming breeze. The two vessels were within hail of each other.

"I see a vessel standing down towards us from the northward; she brings up the breeze with her famously," said Manley, who had been sweeping the horizon with his telescope, a practice to which most naval officers are addicted. "If it holds, we shall be across the channel by to-night."

"I hope so," answered Radcliffe from the Fauna. "No stir in the after-cabin. They must be fearfully tired."

Manley had already made the proper inquiries respecting the Fauna's fair passengers.

While they were still pacing their decks, it became clear that the approaching vessel was a schooner, and probably, from her appearance, a yacht. On she came rapidly towards them, while they still remained becalmed. The Fauna was a little to the northward of the Flora, but they were within hailing distance of each other. A considerable number of men were on the deck of the strange schooner.

"I wonder what that fellow can want with us," observed Gascoyne, "he evidently intends to speak us."

"Why, as I live, he has guns, and the men are at quarters," exclaimed Radcliffe, who, glass in hand, had ascended the rigging to get a better look over the stranger's deck.

"What can he take us for?" asked Gascoyne.

"We shall soon learn," said Radcliffe; "I see a gentleman in naval or yacht club uniform, walking about the deck in a state of great agitation, apparently. And he has stopped, and as I live, I believe that he is making a speech to his crew. Yes, and they are taking off their hats and cheering. It was short, but evidently very heroic. I only hope that if he takes us for enemies, he won't fire first, and then inquire who we are and what we are about."

"Won't you warn the ladies, in case there is a row, that they may not be alarmed?" asked Gascoyne.

"Oh, no, it is too absurd to suppose that there will be a row. I would rather let them sleep on," said Radcliffe. "We may rouse up Lukin, however, he would like to be on deck to see the fun. Under some circumstances I should like to show fight, for I rather think that if the Fauna and Flora were to lay that fellow aboard we should give a very good account of him in spite of his guns. I'll hail Manley, and tell him what we suppose."

Radcliffe hailed as he proposed.

"There must be some mistake, but at all events don't let us undeceive him till the last moment," answered Manley.

There was no more time for conversation before the stranger came almost within speaking distance. The breeze, however, which brought

him down, filled the sails of the two yachts, and gave them steerage way, so that they were able to keep at a little distance from the stranger, one on one side and the other on the other. This puzzled him, but he settled to attack the Fauna first. He was quickly within hail, the crew standing with the lanyards of the triggers in their hands ready to fire.

"Strike, scoundrels! Fenian rascals, strike! or I'll sink you with a broadside!" shouted a voice from the quarter-deck of the schooner.

"Will you, Mickey Molloy—will you? Call me a Fenian rascal, do you?" exclaimed Counsellor Lukin, who at that instant had appeared on deck habited in a richly-flowered silk dressing-gown, and had nimbly leaped into the main rigging.

"Who in the name of wonder are you?" asked the person who had before spoken.

"Counsellor Lukin, at your service, Sir Michael," answered the counsellor, taking off his red nightcap, and making the baronet a profound bow, thereby very nearly losing his balance and going overboard. "So you really did take my friends for Fenians, eh?"

"And are you sure they are not?" asked the baronet. "I know you, counsellor, well enough, but they are such treacherous, deceiving fellows, up to any trick. You can't trust them."

A laugh answered this remark, echoed by many voices.

"Come on board and see," shouted the counsellor, "I'll answer for your safety."

The vessels, which had been separating, were now hove-to, and in a short time Sir Michael was alongside the schooner. It was not, however, till he had had some minutes' conversation with the counsellor that he seemed satisfied with the character of the two yachts.

"And you won't stay on board and breakfast with us? I am sure my friend Radcliffe will be delighted to see you."

"No, thank you—no, thank you," answered the baronet, giving his friend a dig in the ribs with his thumb. "The truth is I have fallen desperately—overwhelmingly in love with one of the young ladies of Ballybrena there—a lovely girl, just suit me. Did you ever see her, counsellor?"

"Possibly; but I heard a rumour, surely, of her being engaged to a young Englishman—a naval officer," answered the counsellor.

"Oh, that's nothing. I've got her guardian's ear, old M'Cormic stands my friend, and she's not likely to hold out against us long. I intend to clench the matter this very day."

"In that case I'll not detain you a moment," answered the counsellor,

shaking the baronet by the hand as he led him to the gangway, with a laugh on his lips and a quizzical glance in his eye. "Good luck to ye, Sir Michael, and to your young bride that is to be, and if I meet the young Englishman I'll tell him that you have cut him out —eh?"

The baronet seemed rather surprised at the hearty burst of laughter which proceeded from the Fauna as he left her side.

"Let's draw the foresail," cried Radcliffe; and the Fauna and Flora shaped a course for the village on the Welsh coast, at which their owners hoped their marriages would take place. For obvious reasons it is well not to mention it.

Two or three weeks after this the Fauna and the Flora again lay in Ballybrena Bay. A lady was on board of each vessel. Counsellor Lukin was seen coming off in the Fauna's gig, which had been sent on shore for him. The Flora's gig, with Mr. and Mrs. Manley, came on board the Fauna to meet him.

"I have summarily settled the whole matter," he exclaimed, as he reached her deck. "I threatened to transport him and his two precious nephews, and he knew that I could perform my threat if he did not disgorge every shilling he had appropriated from the Ballybrena property, and all other moneys belonging to Mrs. Radcliffe and Mrs. Manley, and also if the said two nephews do not instantly take themselves out of the country. To these proposals he at once agreed in order to avoid making the matter public. They both sail for America in a few days with Father Peter M'Cormic, who has also made the country rather warm for himself. Let me congratulate you, my dear Mrs. Radcliffe and Mrs. Manley, and your respective husbands, at having regained that property of which that old villain M'Cormic had deprived you, and believe me that I am thankful so humble an individual as Counsellor Lukin should have been instrumental in serving two such charming young ladies as the heiresses of Ballybrena."

THE CORSAIR'S BRIDE.

CHAPTER I.

A REAL HEROINE OF ROMANCE.

A YELLOW post-chaise was descending by a zig-zag road towards a picturesque villa, situated half way down a cliff forming the side of one of the coves or deep bays which abound on the Devonshire coast.

At the door of the villa stood its mistress, Miss Maria Thornton, a lady of a certain age, not only irreproachable herself, but who considered that all her belongings—her domestic arrangements, her house, her grounds, the very scenery around—must, therefore, of necessity be so—or, as she was fond of saying, “perfect.” She had a bachelor brother in India, General Thornton, reported to have made a large fortune, and to be on the point of returning home, and a niece, Clara Mowbray, the orphan daughter of a sister, and whose arrival from school she was expecting in the aforesaid yellow post-chaise. The censorious world said that Miss Thornton, fearing a rival, had kept her niece longer at school than was necessary. It might have been that she doubted her ability to manage the young lady. Clara had a will of her own, was of a romantic turn of mind, and addicted to reading half-bound volumes in marble covers. Her tendencies were nautical. Scott and Cooper were her favourites among prose writers, Byron among poets. In the “Red Rover” and “Pirate” she delighted. “The Corsair” she knew by heart. For Julia Mannering she had a personal regard.

A very pretty dark-eyed young lady, barely out of her teens, sprang from the post-chaise as it stopped at the door of the villa.

Clara was not only that adorable creature, an heiress, but a very charming girl, there could be no doubt about that. The meeting between the aunt and niece was affectedly affectionate. Clara found it one of the most difficult of performances to love so very perfect a person

as her Aunt Maria. Clara was dressed almost as demurely as the most rigid of Quakeresses.

"Ah, that is perfect, very perfect," observed Miss Maria, turning her round and giving her a formal kiss on the forehead. "I hope that you will always adhere to the style of costume you have adopted."

Miss Thornton had sent Clara three pounds to purchase a dress in which she might return home. Clara gave a slight screw with her pretty mouth, and a laugh came into her bright eyes. She did not say that her uncle had just before sent her fifty, that she might rig herself out, as he expressed himself, according to her own taste, and that he hoped soon to have an opportunity of personally judging of it.

"Miss Clara remains a very ordinary-looking girl; but then she is good and obedient, which is better than having beauty, though she is not perfect—that I'll allow," Miss Thornton observed to her maid Barbara.

"My maid Barbara," as Miss Thornton called her, always agreed with her mistress. To do so was one of the duties she performed in return for wages received. She indemnified herself by laughing at Miss Thornton behind her back, and doing exactly what she pleased. She had some sympathy with, if not affection for Miss Mowbray, on account very much of the way Clara was treated by her aunt. Clara Mowbray might undoubtedly have had a better adviser and confidante than Barbara Sims.

Clara had been at home three or four weeks, and was beginning to get rather tired of the somewhat dull life she was doomed to lead. She consoled herself by procuring a supply of new novels from the circulating library of the neighbouring town, with the perusal of which she indulged Barbara to the rapid exhaustion of Miss Thornton's stock of candles.

"Oh! Miss Mowbray, I wish you'd been on the beach this evening," said Barbara, as she was folding up Clara's evening-dress. "I never did see anybody who looked so like somebody (for all that his clothes were as rough as any fisherman's) as I did this evening. Where he came from I don't know, nor what brought him here. He was talking to the men on the beach, and when I passed by he looked very hard at me, but didn't say nothing. He had the beautifullest moustache I ever did see—quite like a Spanish caviller's, as I have read about. Indeed, Miss Clara, I do declare, to my mind he seemed for all the world just a real Hadonis in a tarpaulin hat and flushing coat, with a cigar in his mouth."

"Oh, a tourist probably," observed Clara, carelessly, though more

interested in her maid's account of the stranger than she was willing to acknowledge. Still she asked, "Was that all you saw of him?"

"Oh, no, Miss Clara; that's what I was a-coming to," answered Barbara, with a simper. "I went on, of course, and, when I turned back, the strange gentleman came up, and, with the most politest of bows, which I don't think Sir Charles Grandison could have beat, asked me if I was you, miss. Of course I said 'No,' and, after a little talk, he said he saw I wasn't, but that he'd heard of you, and that you was the charmingest young lady in these parts, and that he should just like to have met you on the beach, for that as to going inside the doors of your aunt's house, she was such a she-dragon—though he'd walk up to the cannon's mouth, or swim across some water with an ugly name to please you, Miss Clara—he'd rather not have to do that."

"Oh, the Hellespont!" suggested Clara. "What nonsense the man was talking! Yet who can he be?"

"He didn't say a word to let me find out, though, you may be sure, I tried pretty hard, trust me for that," answered Barbara, with a nod of her little head and an habitual wink. "All I know is, that he is a gentleman and rich, because of his gold shirt-studs, and such a lovely cigar-case!"

Barbara did not enumerate among other articles a well-filled purse, out of which the stranger had presented her with three golden sovereigns. She thought when she took them that she would tell her young lady, but then she reflected that Miss Clara might possibly suggest that they should be restored, or that she should take no more; at all events, she determined to say nothing about the matter.

CHAPTER II.

A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, WITH SILKY MOUSTACHES, AND A TARPAULIN HAT ON HIS HEAD.

CLARA MOWBRAY awoke at an unusually early hour. The sunbeams which streamed into her window from over the hill across the bay might have had something to do with this, or the birds which sang so joyously in that bright spring morning in the wood behind the house, or—though it is possible she might not have been ready to confess to the fact—her slumbers may have been disturbed by visions of an Adonis in a tarpaulin, or of a Spanish cavalier with long silky moustaches, or some roving young gentleman like the pirate Cleveland. Whatever the cause,

she arose, and, throwing a light morning-robe over her shoulders, opened the window, near which was a fine telescope on a brass stand. She looked out, and saw stealing into the bay, wafted along by a light southerly breeze, a long, low, black, rakish-looking schooner, with a wide spread of white canvas. It was very natural that she should put her eye to the telescope, adjust the focus, and watch the proceedings of the strange schooner. She was sufficiently acquainted with affairs nautical to appreciate the beauty of the craft, and to know that she was strongly manned and well handled by the way in which she shortened sail, hove-to, lowered a boat, and then once more, the canvas being filled, stood off shore. Clara's glass was directed towards the boat, a fine gig pulling six oars, now rapidly nearing the beach. A roseate hue came into her cheek as she saw seated in the stern-sheets, with the yoke lines in his gloved hands, a gentleman in a tarpaulin hat and a pair of refined-looking moustaches on his lips. There could be little doubt that he was the stranger of whom Barbara had told her. Her watch informed her that it was only a little past four o'clock, and of course she ought to have gone to bed again; but instead of so doing she kept her eye at the end of the telescope, believing that she could watch without being discovered.

It was a very amusing and surely a very harmless proceeding. The gentleman in the tarpaulin landed, and so did two of the men, one carrying a portmanteau and the other a carpet-bag and hat-box, and followed him towards a small inn which stood near the top of the cliff on the other side of the bay. After going a little way, he signed to the seamen to proceed on to the inn, while he sat down on a rock, and, deliberately lighting a cigar, began to smoke. He seemed to be enjoying the scene—a very lovely one. There were the wood-crowned heights, with rugged cliffs jutting into the water, tinged of many a hue by the suns of summer, the cold of winter, the salt spray blown from the foaming billows, the clinging lichens, and the streams of water permeating through them; and there were the wild dark rocks of varied forms, arches, pinnacles, and rounded knolls, their bases washed by the blue sea, now slumbering calmly, a slight ripple only occasionally playing on it, over which the sunbeams' glances brought to mind the happy smile of the sleeping infant. The stranger sat still till the seamen reappeared, and the boat returned with them to the schooner, which, making sail, was soon lost to sight behind one of the many headlands along the coast.

Clara had meantime been proceeding with her toilette, which was almost complete, when once more she looked through the telescope.

Her heart beat quickly, and not without reason—a pair of dark eyes, which she saw as clearly as if they were not ten yards off, were gazing intently at the house. They had discovered her—she was certain of it. Who could the owner be? The mystery must be solved. Who should solve it? That was the question. Should she wake up Barbara and send her out? The desirableness of entrusting the damsel with so delicate a task was questionable. She might not have had a perfect confidence in Barbara's discretion. Besides, was she herself worthy of being a heroine or not? That was the main point. Yes, she was worthy. She was certain of it. She would dare and do as much as any heroine, ancient and modern, had dared and done. So she put on her hat and cloak, went down stairs, boldly opened a side-door, and stepped out into the open air.

How sweet and fresh everything smelt. Surely no one could blame her for preferring a walk in that lovely garden to remaining lazily in bed. After plucking a nosegay, which she placed in her bosom, she sauntered out through a wicket towards the beach. If the stranger were still where she had seen him or not she could not tell; if there, he would of course take the opportunity of introducing himself, and she, in the wisdom of nineteen, could not see any possible objection to his so doing. It did not occur to her that he might be a swindler, a heartless villain, or a rogue of some sort. On she went, trying to look at the sea; not stooping to pick up a shell or star-fish, or a piece of seaweed. The treasures of the deep were strewn bountifully at her feet, but she would just then have been puzzled to assign a name to any one of them. She would very much have liked to have looked up at the spot where the stranger had been sitting, but her courage failed her. She had already got some distance from home. It was time to go back. Not a glimpse had she caught of the stranger. After all, what reason had she to suppose that she was the attraction which had brought him there? Barbara's nonsense. Barbara did talk nonsense sometimes, she confessed that. She walked on. She thought that she heard a step, but she was afraid to look behind her. The hard, damp sand could give forth no sound of a footfall. She was conscious that there was some one near her. Her impulse was to set off running. A rich, manly voice said—

"Are you fond of conchology, Miss Mowbray?"

She started, and turned her head half over her shoulder. Her courage forsook her.

"Sir," she could only say in a tone of surprise, not as indignant as it might have been.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Mowbray, but I forgot that I had not properly introduced myself," said the stranger, lifting his tarpaulin with an air which would have done credit to Bond Street. "May I be allowed to say that my name is Cleveland—Captain Cleveland—Miss Mowbray."

"Cleveland," Clara repeated to herself more than once, as if considering where she had heard the name.

"Pray know me as plain Captain Cleveland, Miss Mowbray, and pardon me for having thus abruptly introduced myself, but there are circumstances which excuse the formalities of society. Surely this is one of them."

What could Clara say? She could not contradict the stranger. He walked on by her side. His voice was very pleasant; his conversation entertaining, if not brilliant. He was evidently a gentleman of education. They were getting rather near the house. Clara began to fear that they might be observed by the lynx-like eyes of her aunt. She bowed to the stranger, as a sign that he must accompany her no farther. He understood the hint, though the bow was not a very stiff one.

"You will pardon me, Miss Mowbray, for the abrupt way in which I introduced myself," he said, giving a look in which respect was so largely mingled with admiration that she could not be offended.

"I should have preferred a more regular introduction," she replied; "but——"

"That were impossible," he said, interrupting her. "There is a mystery, I confess. You will not ask me to reveal it, but put your faith in me. We shall meet again—often—very often, I trust—then you shall know it. Perhaps you will have a right to demand it."

He bowed low, not attempting even to touch her hand, lingering for a moment before he turned and walked rapidly away.

Clara hurried home, not without a dread that her aunt might have seen her. She returned to her room, and through her telescope discovered that Captain Cleveland was reconnoitring the house through his from behind the rock where she had seen him sitting. Poor Clara! how her little heart beat as she descended to the breakfast-room. She had accomplished her design. She almost regretted having made the attempt. Captain Cleveland might have valued her more if she had given him more trouble. She would do so another time, if she escaped discovery this.

Her aunt received her with the usual formal salutation, "Good-day, niece." She made no remark. Clara was afraid to say that she had

been out, lest she should hear, "Yes, I saw you." How awful those words would have sounded. At length she was convinced that she was safe. Even Barbara knew nothing of her early walk. It might be as well not to tell her. The day passed away uneventfully. Curiously enough, the next morning she awoke at daybreak. Scarcely had she finished dressing, than through her faithful telescope she saw the stranger sitting under the rock, as on the previous morning. Should she go to meet him? She went. Her aunt had no idea that she had left the house before breakfast. Though the sun was too hot for Miss Thornton to venture out, Clara took a walk in the forenoon, and in the evening she proposed a ramble considerably farther than Miss Thornton was likely to go. Clara thought that the people about were so very quiet, that it would be foolish to have any hesitation as to going alone. She had taken to the study of natural history.

"It is really surprising what long rambles Clara will make all alone in pursuit of science," Miss Thornton observed. "However, the love of attaining knowledge is laudable in a young person, and think it right to encourage her."

Clara brought home very curious specimens of plants and flowers, and shells and pebbles, but Miss Thornton was not scientific herself, and owned that she could not appreciate their value. One morning the long, low, black schooner came into the bay, and a person landed from her. The following morning Barbara took to making botanical rambles, and continued the practice with as much perseverance as her young mistress. The schooner frequently appeared, and remained all day, till people got accustomed to her coming, though some wondered what brought her there. Clara had altered considerably since her return home. Her manner had become abstracted, her joyous laugh was seldom heard. She was grave and silent generally, or, if compelled to talk, far more voluble than was her wont.

"No news of my brother, the general," exclaimed Miss Thornton at breakfast one morning, when the post-bag had just been opened. "I really begin to fear he is not coming at all."

"I hope nothing can have happened to my uncle," said Clara; and she meant what she said, though she knew that on his death she would become possessed of many thousands of pounds.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE VERY NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF CLARA'S MEETINGS
WITH THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER IS DESCRIBED.

Farewell! farewell! the voice you hear,
Has left its last soft tone with you,
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

SUCH were the words (sung in a tone probably not inferior in richness to that of Sir Walter Scott's hero in the *Pirate*) which awoke Clara from her slumbers even at an earlier hour than usual. She was already dressed—a somewhat strange circumstance. It was rather rash in the singer to venture so near the house, but it is possible that he might have been aware that Miss Thornton slept soundly on the other side. Clara went to the window, and carefully opened it.

"Haste—haste, dearest!" said a voice from below.

Clara uttered a low Yes, and, finishing her toilette by putting on a becoming costume, she placed a letter on the dressing-table, giving a glance at her glass as she did so to arrange her shawl, and with wonderful deliberation descended to the garden door. There stood Captain Cleveland. They walked on together for some distance without speaking.

"I have come, dearest, to bid you farewell for a long time, perhaps for ever," Captain Cleveland began, in a voice trembling with emotion. Clara gave him a reproachful look, and the tears came to her eyes. He went on: "I have enjoyed a dream of happiness unspeakable in meeting with you, but it must now come to an end, unless—and I dare not ask it—you, sweet one, are content to share a rover's lot, to become a corsair's bride. I know full well that the world calls my vocation an evil one. Yes, I own it is evil, and is very likely to bring those who follow it into trouble, especially if a royal ship of superior force is encountered, even although the brave rover and his crew may struggle to the last. For your sake I will abandon it. My brave men and I will seek some other though less glorious calling."

"Oh yes—do, do," whispered Clara, pressing his hand. "Seek service under some State struggling for freedom, or carry merchandise from land to land, gold-dust, and ivory, and spices, and such-like refined things—I have thought about it all—or even become bold smugglers of silks and ribbons. There cannot surely be anything ungentlemanly in that, and it wouldn't be very wrong, I hope."

A smile passed over Cleveland's mouth, probably at the idea of a gallant corsair becoming a contemptible smuggler of silks and ribbons.

"Dearest, I promise anything and everything if you will be mine," exclaimed the captain. "We may reach a town this very day, if the wind holds fair, where, at the altar, before the canonical hour has passed, you may in deed and truth be my bride, my loving wife, and then there is the wide world before us, over which we may roam together, and you may support and guide me to all that is noble, and good, and great."

Who could withstand such an appeal? Not certainly a girl of Clara Mowbray's romantic temperament. Whether or not the promises were false, and uttered but to betray, she was not likely at that moment to discover. Cleveland offering his arm for her support, bore her along to the boat. The schooner lay close in, with her sails loose, getting under weigh. A female was already in the boat. It was Barbara, who was sitting wrapped up in a cloak by the side of Dick Summers, the captain's coxswain. There was no time to ask questions. Clara found herself lifted into the boat, which shoved off immediately, and pulled away from the schooner. Clara's eye caught a glimpse of her own trunk and boxes under the seats.

"I thought as how you'd come, Miss Clara, and so I brought them, that you might have everything comfortable," observed Barbara, demurely.

The wind was fair down Channel. Under all canvas, away sailed the long, low, black schooner, with Miss Clara Mowbray and her maid Barbara Sims on board.

When Miss Maria Thornton came into the breakfast-room she was surprised not to find her niece there before her. "Very odd," she observed to herself, after waiting for some time. "She is not ill, I hope, as poor Barbara is, so Betty tells me."

Betty had attended at Miss Maria's toilette that morning. It is possible that a golden bribe might have prevented her from saying what she knew about the true state of the case. At length, Miss Maria's patience was exhausted: she rang the bell. The butler, Simon Stubbs, knew nothing, perfect butler as he was. Betty could only say that she believed Miss Clara was out walking. Miss Maria was dreadfully afraid of infection, so she wished that the doctor should see Barbara before she visited her. This did not prevent her from looking into Clara's room. No one being there, she put her eye to the telescope, as was her wont. The long, low, black schooner which she had seen in the evening was no longer in the bay, but in the far distance to the westward was a speck of white canvas, while beating into the bay was a fine revenue cutter, the Ranger, commanded by Lieutenant Sparks, for whom Miss Maria had owned that she felt more than an ordinary affection. The

gallant lieutenant was accustomed, when his cutter came into the bay, to resort to her house, and knowing his affection for a good breakfast, she was hurrying out of the room to order a supply of more substantial articles than usually decked her board, when her eye fell on a letter addressed in Clara's handwriting to herself. The mystery of her protracted absence would be explained. She tore it open, and read:—

"DEAR AUNT,—You know not what it is to love and to be beloved by a gallant, noble, and generous sailor."—"Yes I do, though, the little hussy. What does she mean!" exclaimed Miss Maria, with a toss of her head.)—"I have given my affections to one thoroughly worthy of them, but whom the force of circumstances prevents from openly claiming my hand."—(The audacious little minx!)—"He is, he tells me, and I believe him"—(The little fool, she'd believe anything!)"—"a rover—a corsair, the world might call him—but surely one so brave and good would only have plundered the rich that he might bestow their ill-gotten wealth on the poor and helpless."—(Very likely, indeed!) What would she have said if this roving gentleman and his ragamuffins—as Paul Jones once did—had landed and carried off all my plate and jewels—ill-gotten, indeed!—legally left me by my dear, kind father, the late Jeremiah Thornton, Alderman of Bristol? Suppose they had come in the night and murdered us all in our beds? Or—Oh, horrible! what a catastrophe for my perfect household. I'll never take charge of a niece again as long as I live. I haven't got another, that's one comfort. But let me see what the hussy says more.)—"He is bound to far distant seas, to brave the battle and the breeze. He requires some one to comfort and support him, and I have resolved, therefore, should he ask me, as I know he will, to accompany him in the perilous adventures he is about to undertake. Be not alarmed for your niece's honour, dear aunt. That is in the keeping of an honourable man (it would be base to doubt it) as well as in her own, and he will make me legally his at the first port at which we arrive. You will not blame me, therefore, dear aunt, for the step I have taken. It may be a bold one—it is a bold one, and yet I follow but the example of numberless heroines whose histories it has been the chief delight of my existence to peruse. Should my dear uncle arrive, give him my love and duty, and tell him that I hope to return and present to you both my beloved husband, when he has performed some gallant deed worthy of his name, and obtained as his reward, like Sir Henry Morgan, the honour of knighthood.

"Your loving Niece,

"CLARA MOWBRAY."

"Loving niece, indeed! Little hypocrite!" exclaimed the perplexed and bewildered Miss Thornton. "I wonder, now, whether my maid Barbara knew anything of this affair? She is such a pink of propriety, such a perfect lady's-maid, it is not possible."

Miss Thornton hurried to Barbara's room, and knocked at the door. No answer. She opened the door, though timid about the fever. Barbara's bed was vacant, and her box, which stood at its foot, was gone. On her table, denuded of its usual ornaments, was a note. It ran thus:—

"Miss Thornton, marm, I gives this notice that I am leaving your service, because as how Miss Clara is going to get married, and I thinks fit to follow her example. If things turn up as I expect, we shall be back again to receive your pardon. And so no more just now from your obedient servant,

"BARBARA SIMS,

though that isn't to be my name very long, I hope, marm."

"Enough to drive any ordinary-minded person out of her seven senses!" exclaimed Miss Thornton. "Clara and that poor misguided Barbara carried off by rovers. Never supposed such a thing could happen in the nineteenth century. It's all Clara's fault. If I had had the bringing her up it would have been very different. Happily my dear Lieutenant Sparks will be here soon, and I'll confide my troubles to his tender bosom. He'll assist me, if any man can, and maybe sail forth and rescue the girls from the power of the buccaneers, returning in triumph to claim my tender hand as the guerdon of his valour."

Having thus relieved her mind, Miss Maria hastened down stairs to prepare for the reception of Lieutenant Sparks.

Of course no one in the house knew how Miss Clara and Barbara had managed to carry off their trunks, as well as to get away themselves, without being perceived, and so Miss Maria, hopeless of getting any assistance, even from her perfection of a butler, sat down before her hissing tea-urn to await the arrival of her gallant admirer, as she considered him. Every now and then she hurried to the window to ascertain if he were coming. Should she go into the garden to meet him, or await his arrival in the breakfast-room? In the garden she might be overlooked; besides, the subdued light of the breakfast-room, and the viands with which the table was spread, might, for certain reasons, be more favourable to her. She decided to remain in the house. Her heart beat quick as Lieutenant Sparks was announced. She rose to meet him with both her hands extended. Miss Maria was tall and thin, with a long nose and somewhat large grey eyes. Lieutenant Sparks was short—very short, with broad shoulders, and broad all the way down; Dutch-built, with great floating powers, as he said of himself. He had a nose of the button order, like a red spot in the middle of his face; and as to his eyes, they were decidedly ferretty. What had been the colour originally it was impossible to say. His whole countenance, however, though a mass of the most extraordinary weather-beaten indentations and farrows, beamed with jolly good nature, and prevented most people from finding fault with his looks. His arms were long, and his hands, from long acquaintance with the tar-bucket and wet ropes, were as hard as the hide of a rhinoceros. Still Miss Maria pronounced him handsome, and had some fear less Clara might not

prove indifferent to his perfections. Lieutenant Sparks had a good appetite. He prided himself on it. Miss Maria was aware of the fact, and lovingly allowed him to shovel into his capacious mouth a large supply of rolls and eggs and ham before she opened the subject of her grief and alarm. At length she commenced, and ran on till she was almost out of breath, winding up by saying—

"Who would have thought it, Lieutenant Sparks, that an elopement should have taken place from my house—my establishment—where everything is so perfect, so correct?"

"And yet not to be compared to its sweet mistress!" exclaimed the lieutenant, taking her hand, which she did not withdraw.

"Can you help me?" she asked softly.

"Of course, Miss Maria—of course! I'll go through fire and water to please you," he answered, pressing the hand he held to his somewhat bread-and-butterly lips. "We'll go in chase of the schooner, and bring back the truants, though between you and I and the bedpost, the fellow's being a corsair is all humbug. Now you see, Miss Maria, the fact of the case is this: If I was to come up with the schooner, and claim the young lady, it's my belief she wouldn't come with me. Where's my authority? I've none. My commission only authorises me to capture contraband, not runaway young ladies, whatever you may choose to call 'em. Now, it strikes me if you, dear Miss Maria, was to come with me, you'd have due authority over your niece, and could bring her back to the path of rectitude and virtue, while I could tackle the audacious young villain who has run off with her, and clap him in limbo should he prove obstrepulous."

Miss Maria hung down her head.

"But consider my reputation, dear Mr. Sparks," she said, softly. "The world might misconstrue my motives. Would my going be as correctly perfect in all respects as is desirable?"

"Oh, bless your heart, Miss Maria, yes!" exclaimed the gallant officer, pressing the hand he held with renewed vigour. "I can make it all right, d'ye see, whenever you choose to name the day."

"Then I'll consent, dear Sammy," said the lady, sinking gracefully into the lieutenant's arms—that is to say, if Betty will go, since the faithless Barbara has deserted me."

"Betty! Oh, bless you, yes, Betty will go!" cried the lieutenant. "My old coxswain, Tom Stumps, has long been a courting her, and he'll look well after her, depend on that."

Betty was forthwith called in, and made no objection. A trunk and two or three bandboxes were speedily packed. Stamps, who had fel-

lowed his master up to the house, was ordered to carry them quickly down to the boat. Miss Maria, summoning Grimes, the perfect butler, told him that she should leave the house in his charge till her return in the evening, and then, leaning on the arm of the lieutenant, she followed her luggage and Betty, who had accompanied it, and had not forgotten to lay hands on such savoury viands as were ready in the house, and not probably to be found on board the cutter.

"A pretty rig!" exclaimed Grimes, lifting up his hands as he saw them embark; "Miss Clara been and run off with a handsome young chap, and I'll not blame her; though as for Barbara, I'll not say what I can say; but for the old woman for to go for to hop off with that sea-turtle of an officer, it's more than I can stand, and I must take my measures accordingly. Oh, Barbara! Oh, Betty! for to treat me in that way—for to desert your loving Giles Grimes. But they're all alike. Oh, womankind—oh, womankind!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHASE OF THE RUNAWAYS.

GRIMES stood watching the receding cutter which bore off his mistress and Betty, and meditating on matters of no small interest to himself, when, as the cutter's canvas was disappearing beneath the well-defined horizon of that blue summer sea, he saw another vessel, a schooner, evidently a yacht from her handsome, orderly, and yet comfortable appearance, standing into the bay. She brought up, her canvas was leisurely furled, and, a boat being lowered, a stout gentleman, followed by two dark-skinned personages in white dresses, carrying sundry articles, such as carpet-bags and a dressing and writing case. Two broad-shouldered yachtsmen brought up the rear with some trunks, which would have broken the backs of the Orientals.

"The general, by all that's horrible!" exclaimed Grimes. "But I'll just go and face the old Bengal tiger, and get it over as soon as possible. Perhaps he'll set off after the rest."

Grimes was right. The stout gentleman was General Thornton. Grimes was, however, rather surprised at the way in which the general received the account of the occurrences of that morning.

"Well done, Charley Chamberlaine; you've made quick work of it, my lad!" he exclaimed, seemingly forgetting the presence of the butler. "And old sister Maria run after them—ha! ha! ha!—with a sea-

lieutenant. She and her gay Lothario will find Charley a difficult customer to deal with. However, to prevent mischief, or to see the fun, I must be after them." Suddenly the general seemed to recollect the butler's presence, and so adding, "Should your mistress or Miss Mowbray return, tell them I am gone to look after them," he faced rapidly about, and retraced his steps to the boat.

"My dear general, what has brought you back again?" exclaimed Colonel Fenwick, the owner of the Kestrel, as he stepped up the side.

"Why, all my womankind gone gadding, and I must go in chase. I put young Chamberlaine, who saved my life at Goojerat, and whom I love as a son, up to a wrinkle, and, by Jupiter! he has carried out my suggestions so completely that he has altogether got the start of me, and I'm afraid some mischief will come of it. However, up anchor, and make chase after the truants. Ha! ha! ha! Well done, Charley! I can't help laughing. Though the boy was always first in a charge or mounting a breach and last in a retreat, and had twice led a forlorn hope before he was nineteen, yet I don't believe the fellow would have had the courage to tackle my fanciful romantic little niece if he hadn't had me to back him. They tell me that she had set her heart on having a blue jacket, and as they do cut us out occasionally, I felt a double satisfaction in securing her for a gallant red-coat, though, after all, I believe the girls care more about the inside than the out in reality."

"Of course they do, if the heart is brave and true," answered Colonel Fenwick, who was of a less mercurial disposition than his friend. "But I say, general, it does not do to set a ball rolling unless you know where it will stop. However, we'll clap on all sail, and try to get up in time to prevent serious consequences. Where have the young people gone to, think you?"

"To Penzance, to a certainty. Chamberlaine has friends there, and I trust him for making all arrangements for marrying the little girl in proper style. My fear is, that my sister Maria will arrive in time to mar the plot; and perhaps Clara, when she discovers that she has been tricked, will, like a young filly, shake herself clear of her harness and scamper away."

"Make all sail, captain, and let us see how the Kestrel can walk along," cried the colonel, who, like many yachtsmen, had adopted a nautical phraseology.

The wind had risen, and got up a considerable sea, which tumbled about even the fine schooner in a way which would have tried the stomachs of people less seasoned than were those on board her.

"I wonder how sister Maria is enjoying this!" cried the general, as

he sat at luncheon, with a slice of venison on his fork. "The old lady must be wishing herself safe on *terra firma* again, I suspect. Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER V.

THE FUGITIVES OVERTAKEN AND THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES WHICH ENSUED.

We must follow the fortunes of the Ranger. She was in a heavy sea, a considerable distance to the westward of the Eddystone, rolling, as her fair passenger, Miss Maria Thornton, considered, in a way truly awful, and giving every now and then a peculiar little unaccountable pitch and kick, which made the poor lady utterly miserable. It was rash, very rash, in Lieutenant Sparks to allow her thus to tempt the fickle winds and waves.

"Oh, Lieutenant Sparks! Lieutenant Sparks! why did you bring me; oh, oh!" exclaimed Miss Maria, as the officer affectionately held her head over the side. "You should have told me of this ter—oh! oh!" The lady's remarks were invariably cut short in a manner which it is not necessary further to particularise, and which sometimes left her meaning uncertain. "If ever I am tempted to—oh! oh! Most abominable, most treacherous," she continued, "most—oh! oh!"

"Bean't we all going to be drowned?" oh! oh! oh!" echoed Betty, suffering scarcely less than her mistress.

"Never fear, Bess, old girl, all will come right when you gets some sea-prog aboard," observed Stumps, whose sturdy arm supported the little fat housemaid, as she too leaned over the side of the vessel, proving how completely the ocean brings all ranks to a level, or rather equally turns them topsy-turvy.

The lieutenant began to fear that he should lose the lady, and heartily wished that he had not pressed her coming on board the cutter. Sometimes she insisted on returning, but this would only make matters worse, as, having to be beat back, the cutter would pitch much more than she was now doing. He strongly wished to ran into port, but by so doing he should probably miss the fugitives. While thus perplexed, he was much pleased to see another revenue-cutter beating along shore. He stood towards her. She had seen a schooner answering the description of the chase standing in for Penzance.

"Rouse up, dear lady, we shall catch the runaways!" exclaimed the gallant lieutenant, pressing the lady's somewhat bony hand. But the

only answer he could elicit was an oft-repeated "Oh! oh! oh!" in various tones and cadences. "Miss Maria—Miss Thornton—my dear Miss Maria—my dear Miss Thornton—my own dear Maria—my dearest my sweetest Miss Thornton, do in mercy to one who loves you, rouse up, and don't look so terribly like a—as if you were really going to die."

Thus tenderly appealed to, Miss Thornton returned the officer's pressure:—

"Oh yes, yes, but take me into smooth water as soon as you can," she murmured, though it was long before she recovered the serenity of her feelings.

At length the beautiful harbour of Penzance appeared in sight, and in the centre of the bay lay the long, low, black schooner, which had left Rose Mount Bay in the morning. The sails were furled, and one solitary individual walked her deck. Not without considerable trepidation, Miss Thornton, accompanied by Betty, took her seat in the cutter's gig, steered by Lieutenant Sparks, Stumps pulling stroke oar. They were soon alongside the schooner.

"What schooner is that?" hailed the lieutenant.

"The Syren," answered the watch on deck.

"Where's her master?" asked the lieutenant.

"Ashore," briefly replied the man, resuming his walk.

"What brought you here?" the officer demanded.

"Don't know," was the curt reply.

"Who did you bring here?" asked the lieutenant.

"Ourselves," said the man, in a tone which showed that he might possibly decline to say more.

"What have you got aboard?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Provisions," answered the man.

"Nothing else?" was asked.

"Stores," was the answer.

"What besides?"

"More provisions."

"Anybody besides yourself on board?"

"No."

"Where are the rest?"

"Gone ashore."

"Small change to be got out of that fellow," observed Lieutenant Sparks. "What have they gone ashore for?"

"A wedding," answered the man, with a grin. "And it's pretty sure to be over, too, by this time."

"Oh dear! oh dear! I thought so; I was afraid so," exclaimed

Miss Thornton. "Let us get on shore as fast as we can, and put a stop to it. The girl will be married to this smuggler, or corsair, or ragamuffin of some sort, and all her fortune will be spirited away."

The lieutenant, obedient to the lady's commands, ordered his men to pull for their lives. Hoping to see some fun, the crew gave way in style, and Miss Maria and Betty were soon deposited safely on dry land, when the former, taking the lieutenant's arm, hurried up to the church, followed by Betty and Stumps, and all the men except the boat-keeper.

A crowd was collecting outside the door of the sacred edifice, and a yellow post-chaise and four, with a rumble behind, and postilions with favours, was drawn up before it. The eager Miss Maria, dragging the unwilling Sparks, rushed in.

"I forbid the banns—the marriage—the ceremony!" she shrieked out. "She's my niece, my ward; she's under my charge; and that ragamuffin, that swindler, that abominable deceiver, has run off with her."

"Madam, the ceremony is concluded. I have just married two couple; which of the women is your niece?" said the clergyman, who appeared at that moment at the vestry door.

"There, then! there, that's her and that's him!" cried Miss Maria, pointing to Clara and the supposed Cleveland, whom she saw over the clergyman's shoulder.

"Pardon me, madam, there must be some mistake. The gentleman is known to me; they have been married by special license, and the gentleman showed me the permission of the lady's guardian," said the clergyman.

"Forgeries, every one of them! I'll stake my existence on that," cried Miss Maria.

"I tell you that you are mistaken as to his identity."

The positive assertions of the lady, backed by the appearance of a well-known naval officer, shook the confidence of even the clergyman himself. There is seldom wanting some zealous person in all places ready to take up a cause, whether right or wrong. Such was found in a worthy magistrate, who had that instant come into the church.

"What do you believe to be the name of the gentleman to whom your niece has just been married, madam?" he asked.

"Cleveland, that girl said—Captain Cleveland, a corsair, pirate, or something of that sort, I fully believe," answered Miss Maria, vehemently.

"Why, I see he has married under the name of Chamberlaine—

Captain Charles Chamberlaine, of the Honourable East India Company's service," observed the magistrate, with becoming dignity. "There is evidently fraud somewhere. If you bring the charge, madam, I will arrest the accused."

"Ay, that I will," cried Miss Maria; "I charge him with running away with my niece and marrying her under a false name, and with fraud," &c., &c.

"Very well, madam; I fully understand the case, and as, fortunately, my clerk is in attendance, I will at once make out the necessary documents for the legal apprehension of the gentleman," whispered the zealous magistrate.

Had the bridegroom and bride dreamed what was going on they would probably have managed to make their escape, but on repairing to the carriage they found the horses heads held by two constables, who refused to allow them to proceed. In the mean time, the magistrate and his clerk had made out the document necessary for the detention of the bridegroom, who, to his very great disgust, found himself in the grasp of the officers of the law, while Miss Maria, rushing out of the vestry, seized upon Clara and claimed her as her ward. Poor Clara would have fallen fainting to the ground had not Lieutenant Sparks sprang forward to support her. The Syren's men showed every disposition to rescue their captain, had he not ordered them to remain quiet.

"And now, my good people, I want to know of what I am accused, and why I and my newly-married wife are prevented in so unseemly a way from pursuing our journey?"

"Accused—sir—accused—why, of all sorts of horrible crimes and misdemeanours," exclaimed Miss Maria, lifting her fists in a way which made Lieutenant Sparks draw back a pace or two with a look of dismay. "Of running away with my niece and her maid, and marrying them under a false name; of being a pirate, or an impostor of some sort, and turning the heads of silly girls with your wiles, and if that's not enough to have you sent to Botany Bay for life, I say there's no law in England. And now you are laughing at me, jeering at me, and don't seem moved by a word I have said. Oh, Clara, Clara! you have had a fortunate escape, a blessed escape, indeed you have, girl. You shall go back with me, and live quietly at Rose-hill, while you endeavour to blot out from your memory all remembrance of that base deceiver!"

While Miss Maria had been speaking, the bridegroom had written a few words on a slip of paper and given it to Dick Summers, who hurried off with it as fast as his legs could carry him, followed by Barbara, who

seemed to have no little dread of being left near her late mistress without his protection.

"Go back with you, aunt? indeed I will not!" exclaimed Clara, recovering herself. "I will accompany my husband wherever he may go, and if you send him to prison, I will go too. As to his having married me under a false name, I do not see any harm in that, provided I know his real name, and that I happen to do. Do I not, dear husband?"

"Yes, dearest, you know my real and my false names—certainly the only names I have ever borne," answered the supposed pirate, with extraordinary calmness.

"Well, madam, the majesty of the law has hitherto been properly supported, as I trust it will ever be when I have to do with it," said the magistrate, bowing to Miss Thornton. "I was on my way to the court, which is now sitting, and if you will repair thither, we will go into this important and complicated case at once."

This seemed the best course to pursue. The constables led off the bridegroom; Lieutenant Sparks, forgetting Miss Maria, gallantly gave his arm to poor Clara, who was glad of its support, while a small gentleman in black, seeing that no one had taken charge of the chief witness, offered his to Miss Maria, and she, believing that he was the curate, took it with her most stately bow, and not the most pleasant glance at her faithless lieutenant. After walking a little way, however, in answer to some remark she made, her knight replied:—

"No, marm, I am clerk and sexton to the parish, and many a curious thing I have seen and heard."

"You what!" exclaimed the bewildered lady. "Get off, you miserable little anatomy! A clerk and sexton dare to offer his arm to a lady of my position and character—to one of the family of the Thorntons! What will the world come to next!"

"There's many a better I've shovelled the earth over," muttered the offended sexton, as he dropped behind, while the lady stalked on towards Clara and Lieutenant Sparks. "Can't say that she'd make a pretty corpse, either."

By the time one or two unimportant cases had been disposed of, Summers and Barbara had returned, and the bridegroom and the witnesses against him were then summoned. The accusation was read over, and the prisoner was then called on for his defence.

At this juncture, Clara, escaping from Lieutenant Sparks, ran forward and placed herself by his side, with a glance round which spoke more plainly than words, "For weal or for woe, I am thine."

"I am accused of marrying this lady under a false name," he began,

in a voice which some declared showed signs of conscious guilt. "The name I have married under is the name which properly belongs to me, and the only one which I have ever publicly borne. As to marrying the lady without the consent of her rightful guardian, this letter will clearly show that I have not done so. I will read part of it, if you please, sir."

"No, the whole—the whole!" cried the magistrate.

"The whole—the whole!" echoed Miss Maria. "Every word of it. No prevarications—no subterfuges, if you please."

"I'm the proper person to read the letter," observed the magistrate. "I direct that it shall be handed to me."

"As you like; but I can only say that I would rather it were not read aloud," said the prisoner, handing the letter to the magistrate. "It is, I should observe, from General Thornton, the uncle and guardian of my wife."

"Ho! ho!" cried the magistrate, taking the letter, "I smell a rat. However, I'll read it."

"DEAR CHARLEY,—You have my full permission to marry my little niece, Clara Mowbray, if you can win her. She is, I hear, a charming creature, but somewhat fanciful and romantic, and if I were to suggest to her to fall in love with you, the chances are greatly against her doing so, and I am the last man in the world to make a girl marry a man whom she does not fancy, even if he were my best friend. I leave the mode of carrying out the affair to you, only the sooner you can get her away beyond the reach of the talons of that curious female specimen of humanity, my old sister Maria, the better. She'd quickly drive the happy young creature into some act of folly with her notions of perfection and propriety. She was a sad goose, though with some good points, and I do not suppose has altered for the better in her old age. I tell you this that you may stand clear of her. Good luck to you, my dear fellow! I hope that I may come in in time to give the bride away, but I don't dictate.

"Yours ever,

"JACK THORNTON."

"I don't believe it. The letter is a forgery—a base forgery! My dear brother, the general, would never dream of calling me a curious female specimen of humanity—indeed, he knows me too well to venture on doing that. Old goose, indeed!—talons, indeed!" shrieked Miss Maria, holding up her hands with fingers bent in a way which again made Lieutenant Sparks spring nimbly across the witness-box. "I tell you the whole is a forgery—a base forgery—part of a plot formed by that abominable swindling vagabond and that misguided wretched little minx, my niece. I insist on his being sent to prison forthwith, and, if there is law in England, he shall rue the day he ventured to play me

such a trick ; and my miserable niece, I insist on having her restored to my tender guardianship."

"No—no—no ! If my husband is carried off to prison, I will go with him !" cried Clara, clinging to the prisoner's arm. "I don't care what his name is and what he is, I'll not have him ill treated. If he is Captain Chamberlaine, I am Mrs. Chamberlaine, and it's my belief that that letter is written by Uncle Thornton, though he has been practising rather too severely on my simplicity ; but I hope that it will be the last romantic act that I shall ever commit in my life."

"Bravo, little girl—bravo !" shouted a voice from the farther end of the court ; but it was drowned by Miss Maria's exclamation of "Let me see the document ; if it's a forgery, I'll treat it as it deserves !" Her gestures showed that the letter would fare badly if it once got into her hands. The magistrate, therefore, would not let it go out of his power, but held it up before her. The lady's sight being none of the best, and as she disdained the use of glasses, she was compelled to stoop forward towards the paper.

"Of course—of course ! It is as utterly unlike the general's handwriting as are the expressions made use of with regard to me to the terms in which he invariably speaks of me."

"Oh no, marm, I assure you that you are mistaken," said Barbara, coming forward with mock simplicity. "I happened to pick up one of the last letters the general wrote to Miss Clara that was, and in it he called you his old sister Maria, and said you were a good old goose, and that she musn't mind your nonsense, but just bear it till he came home ; indeed he did, marm."

"Quit my service !" exclaimed Miss Thornton, majestically.

"I've quitted it already, marm," said Barbara, curtseying. "I've a husband to look after me. I'm Mrs. Summers now."

"And I hopes to have one as soon as the bands is called," exclaimed Betty. "So, marm, I gives you warning this day."

"Begone, girl—vixen !" cried poor Miss Maria, indignantly.

"Silence in the court !" exclaimed the magistrate.

"Hear me, sir," said Clara. "I am sorry to have to say it, but I can bear evidence to the truth of the statement made by the last witness."

"You are that gentleman's wife, and your evidence cannot be taken. There is an evident *animus* in the assertions of Miss Thornton's late maid servant, and as she certainly had no business to read any letter from General Thornton, she may have been mistaken or fabricated the story. I feel it, therefore, my duty to commit the prisoner for trial.

"And, sir," he added, addressing the unfortunate bridegroom, "you should understand that the crime you have committed is of a very serious character, and may lead to consequences most painful and humiliating to yourself. Constables, remove the prisoner."

"If that's the way things are going, we won't allow anything of the sort," cried Summers, turning to the Syren's crew, who crowded the farther end of the court. "On, lads, and rescue the captain!"

With a loud cheer, which made the magistrate and his clerk jump from their seats, the seamen sprang towards the dock.

"Lieutenant Sparks, assist me in maintaining the majesty of the law," cried the magistrate.

"Yes, if you've a particle of spirit in you, don't let that impudent puppy escape," exclaimed Miss Maria, giving him a shove which nearly sent him on his nose.

"Come, come, things are going rather too far," cried a stout old gentleman, stepping forward, followed by two or three others. "I am General Thornton; my friends here will prove my identity. I wrote that note to my young friend Charley Chamberlaine, giving him full permission to marry my ward and niece, Clara Mowbray, which it seems he did this morning, rather sooner than I expected. Come here, little girl, and give your old uncle a buss, and now go back to your husband and cherish him, for he deserves a good wife, and I hope that wisdom will come with age, as it has in the case of your venerable aunt. Beg pardon, Maria. Come, come, don't be hard-hearted, old girl. I didn't intend to offend you, for I never thought that you would see or hear of my letters. However, it's a lesson not to write about anybody what one does not wish to be seen. You'll pardon me—that's all right. You must come and preside at a wedding breakfast I have ordered at the Crown; and I hope all the gentlemen present, who are blessed with wives and daughters, will bring them to it as soon as possible. Lieutenant Sparks, will you lead off your intended? for, as I hear, you aspire to my sister's hand."

"True, I did, general, but it is an honour which, for ten sharp reasons, I must decline," said the lieutenant, bowing.

"Oh, treachery of mankind! I should like to have your eyes out!" exclaimed the aged maiden. "You base deceiver!"

"Come along, good folks—come along," cried the general. "Summers, you and your wife are to look after the breakfast in the servants' hall; with the crews of the cutter and the yachts you'll have no lack of guests, and don't forget to drink the health of the gallant captain and his bride."

"There's one case more, general, which can be quickly disposed of," said the magistrate. "A man—supposed to be a servant—taken in a cart, with boxes full of plate and other valuables. Very suspicious circumstance. Bring forward the prisoner."

"What, my perfect butler, Grimes! Can I believe my eyes?" exclaimed Miss Maria.

"The Thornton crest, at all events," cried the general. "A clear case. Commit the rogue and get it over, or the breakfast will be spoiled."

"Then I've lost all faith and confidence in the honour and honesty of mankind in general, and especially of my own once perfect household," exclaimed Miss Maria. "My niece runs away from me—my lady's-maid tricks me—my butler robs me—my housemaid deserts me—my only brother talks of my talons, and calls me a curious female specimen of humanity. You know you did, Jack; and oh, Lieutenant Sparks, you base deceiver!" And the lady burst into tears.

"Come, come, she's got a heart, or something like it, and a swinging big fortune compared to a lieutenant's half-pay, and if I can but manage to kill the cat in time, it'll do," said Sparks to himself. Then once more drawing near to the lady, he added, "I don't mind boarding an enemy, or fighting my ship against any odds, but I never could see a woman in tears and not try to dry them. Come, old girl, just swab up those pearly drops and I'll splice you off-hand, if you can get the general's consent."

"Oh yes, by all means, my good fellow. Take her, Sparks—take her," cried the general, warmly. "You'll marry him, Maria? If you don't, you'll never get another, you may be sure of that."

"My too—too tender heart yields to his urgent solicitations," answered Miss Maria, putting out her hand. "Oh, Sparks, you well-nigh broke it!"

"Tell that to the marines," observed the general, aside. "It has stood a good number of severer shocks than this last, I can answer for it. Very well, Sparks, my future brother-in-law, that is settled; and Betty—if that's your name—just go back and dust the house, and you can marry the sea-cook at the same time that your mistress marries his master. Barbara Sims, you are disposed of, I understand?"

"Yes, sir. But Summers is my name, and in future I intend only to wait on my husband, and be an obedient wife to him," answered Barbara, with a curtsey.

"And now, my little niece, let me tell you that though you are not exactly a Corsair's Bride, you have married as fine a fellow as ever

headed a charge or stormed a battery, and I hope that you'll make him a loving and obedient wife," said the general.

"I hope so, uncle, for I have grown wiser already since the morning, and as I suspect all that has occurred will, somehow or other, get into print, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I strongly advise all young ladies by no means to follow my silly example, and if they have a fancy to marry, to wait quietly at home till a father, or uncle, or brother, is ready to give them away," said Clara.

"I'll echo my young bride's opinion, that the girl who runs away does the silliest of acts, and that in nine cases out of ten the man is a scoundrel who tempts her. As I had my friend's authority, I may plead extenuating circumstances in my own case, but I was very nearly getting into a serious difficulty in consequence; and I say also, to all whom it may concern, don't follow my example," said Captain Chamberlaine, making a bow to the magistrate as he led his bride out of the court.

"It is the first plot I ever concocted, and it will be my last," cried the general. "However, all is well that ends well; and so, cheer lads, cheer, for the worthy upholder of the majesty of the law, and one cheer more for the Corsair's Bride."

The old court house rang with the loud huzzas which broke from the throats of the seamen, and the whole party invited hurried off to regale themselves at the feast provided by the jovial old general's liberality.



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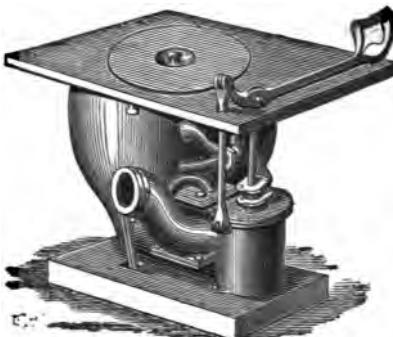
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